













THE  
PULPIT COMMENTARY

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ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

*Exposition and Homiletics*  
THE RIGHT HON. AND RIGHT REV.  
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*Homilies by Various Authors*

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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1.—*Came down . . . and taught for which came down . . . taught, A.V.; saying for and said, A.V.; custom* (ἔθος) *for manner, A.V.* Except ye be circumcised, etc. The question thus raised nearly effected the disruption of the Church, and was the most serious controversy that had yet arisen. If the views broached by these Judæan Christians had prevailed, the whole character of Christianity would have been changed, and its existence probably cut short. How great the danger was appears from even Peter and Barnabas having wavered in their opinion. (For St. Paul's treatment of the subject, see Rom. ii. 25, etc.; iv.; Gal. v. 2—6; vi. 12—15, etc.) The expression, *Τὶνές κατέλθοντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας*, is so like that in Gal. ii. 11, *Πρὸ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου*, as to suggest very strongly the consideration whether Peter was not at Antioch at this time, and whether the scene related in Gal. ii. 11, etc., did not precede, and in fact cause, the Council of Jerusalem. In this case the "dissension and disputation" spoken of in ver. 2 would include and directly point to the memorable rebuke given by Paul to Peter; and we should understand that Peter, accepting Paul's rebuke, preceded him and Barnabas, and prepared the way at Jerusalem for the solution arrived at. And, indeed, Peter's words at Jerusalem are almost an echo of Paul's words addressed to him at Antioch. If Barnabas had shown a leaning towards the Judaizing party, he would the more readily have been accepted by them as one of the embassy. The chief objection to this hypothesis is that in Gal. ii. 11 Peter's visit to Antioch seems to be spoken of as something subsequent to the journey of St. Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem. But it is not in the least necessary so to understand

it. St. Paul's mention of his visit to Jerusalem might naturally recall the incident which had led to it, and which was another example of his own independence. Farrar places Peter's visit to Antioch between the Council of Jerusalem and the quarrel with Barnabas, in the time indicated in ver. 35 of this chapter (vol. i. ch. xxiii.), and so do Conybeare and Howson (vol. i. p. 238), Meyer, and Alford ('Proleg.', p. 24; note on ch. xv. 36, and Gal. ii. 11). Renan ('St. Paul,' p. 290, etc.) and Lewin (vol. i. ch. xiii.) place it after St. Paul's return to Antioch, at the conclusion of his second missionary journey (ch. xviii. 22, 23). No absolute certainty can be arrived at, but see note to ver. 35. Custom (see ch. xvi. 21); *τὰ ἔθη* is the technical term for the Mosaic institutions, used by Josephus and Philo (see too ch. vi. 14; xxi. 21, note).

Ver. 2.—*And when for when therefore, A.V.; questioning for disputation, A.V.; the brethren* (in italics) *appointed for they determined, A.V.* Certain other of them. One of these would be Titus (Gal. ii. 1). The circumstance that, on this occasion, St. Paul did go up to those who were apostles before him, to consult with them on a matter of doctrine, shows at once why he refers so pointedly to this visit in Gal. ii. 1, etc., and is almost conclusive evidence that this visit is the one there referred to. The companionship of Barnabas; the agreement of the expression, "I went up by revelation," with the fact that he was sent by the Church, doubtless in obedience to some voice of the Spirit, like that mentioned in ch. xiii. 2; the occasion, a dispute about the circumcision of Gentile converts; the line taken by Paul and Barnabas in declaring the conversion of the Gentiles (ch. xv. 4, 12; Gal. ii. 27), and the result (ch. xv. 19; Gal. ii. 5, 7, 9), are all strong, not to say conclusive, marks of the identity of

the two visits. The apostles and elders. This phrase marks the constitution of the governing part of the Church of Jerusalem. The addition in vers. 22 and 23 of "the whole Church," and (according to the T.R.) of "the brethren," shows the part the body of the believers had in approving and sanctioning the decisions of the elders. The transaction marks the position of the Church of Jerusalem as the metropolitan Church of Christendom.

Ver. 3.—*They therefore . . . passed for and . . . they passed, A.V.; both Phœnicia for Phenice, A.V.* Being brought on their way (*προπεμφέντες*). The word *προπέμπειν* has two distinct though allied meanings; one is "to conduct a person on his way," as in ch. xx. 38; xxi. 5; the other is "to help a person on his way, by supplying him with all necessities for his journey," as in Rom. xv. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 6; 2 Cor. i. 16; Titus iii. 13; 3 John 6. This last is the meaning here. Being the messengers of the Church, they travelled at the Church's expense. Both Phœnicia and Samaria. Their course would be through Berytus, Tyre, Sidon, and Samaria. Declaring the conversion of the Gentiles. There was an especial reason for doing so, as it had a strong bearing upon the great controversy about to be decided at Jerusalem.

Ver. 4.—*The apostles for of the apostles, A.V.; the elders for elders, A.V.; rehearsed for declared, A.V.* They were received of the Church, etc. Being themselves the formal envoys of the Church of Antioch, they were formally received as such by the Church of Jerusalem, headed by the apostles and elders.

Ver. 5.—*Who for which, A.V.; it is for that it was, A.V.; charge for command, A.V.* There rose up, etc. As soon as Paul and Barnabas had finished their recital of the conversion of the heathen to whom they had preached the gospel, certain Christian Pharisees who were at the meeting disturbed the joy of the brethren and the unanimity of the assembly by getting up and saying that all the Gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the Law. This, of course, would have included Titus, who was present with St. Paul (Gal. ii. 1, 3). The Epistle to the Galatians deals directly and forcibly with this question.

Ver. 6.—*The elders for elders, A.V.; were gathered for came, A.V.; to for for to, A.V.* The question was too important, and, perhaps, the persons who advanced the objections too considerable, to allow of a decision to be taken on the spot. A special meeting of the Church was called to consider the matter.

Ver. 7.—*Questioning for disputing, A.V., as in ver 2; brethren for men and brethren,*

*A.V., as in ch. vii. 2, etc.; you for us, A.V. and T.R.; by my mouth the Gentiles for the Gentiles by my mouth, A.V.* Questioning. It was a repetition of the same scene that took place at Antioch. Peter, etc. It seems to have been wise on Peter's part to allow the meeting to exhaust itself by fruitless disputations before he rose to speak. His rising, with all the authority of his person and position, commanded immediate attention. A good while ago; literally, *from ancient days*, or still more exactly, *from the days of the beginning of the gospel* (*ἡμερὰ ἀρχαίαι*), days belonging to the beginning (*ἀρχή*) of the Church's existence, and dating far back in Peter's own apostolic life. Nothing can be more natural than this allusion to the conversion of Cornelius, and the gift of the Holy Ghost to the Gentile inmates of his house, as related in ch. x. 44.

Ver. 8.—*Heart for hearts, A.V. (καρδιογνώστης).* Bare them witness; i.e. set the mark of his approval upon them, vouched for their sincerity (see the use of the verb *μαρτυρέω* in Luke iv. 22; John iii. 26; ch. vi. 3; x. 22, etc.).

Ver. 9.—*He made no distinction for put no difference, A.V. (comp. ch. x. 20, note); cleansing for purifying, A.V.* This is exactly the doctrine of Gal. ii. 16 and Rom. iii. 30, with which compare also ver. 11.

Ver. 10.—*That ye should put for to put, A.V.* The Greek words cannot be construed as the A.V. takes them. It is not a Greek construction to say *πειράζειν τινα ποιεῖν κακόν*, "to tempt any one to do evil." The infinitive *ἐπιθεῖναι* must be taken gerundially, "by placing," or "putting," and the sense is—Why do you try God's patience by your provocation in putting an unbearable yoke upon the necks of those who believe? Or, "as if he had not power to save by faith" (Chrysostom).

Ver. 11.—*We shall be saved through the grace, etc., for through the grace . . . we shall be saved, A.V.; Jesus for Jesus Christ, A.V. and T.R.; in like manner for even, A.V.* "How full of power are these words! The same that Paul says at large in the Epistle to the Romans, the same says Peter here" (Chrysost., 'Hom.,' xxxii.).

Ver. 12.—*And for them, A.V.; they hearkened what signs for declaring what miracles, A.V.* Kept silence; marking the contrast between the noisy questionings and disputings which had preceded Peter's speech, and the quiet orderly attention with which they now listened to Paul and Barnabas, telling them of the conversion of the Gentiles. It recalls Virgil's description of the effect of the presence of a man of grave piety upon an excited crowd—



"Tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem  
Aspexere, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant."

(Æneid, i. 152.)

Ver. 13.—*Brethren for men and brethren, A.V., as ver. 7. James answered. James's place as presiding bishop is here distinctly marked by his summing up the debate. "This (James) was bishop, as they say, and, therefore, he speaks last" (Chrysost., 'Hom.,' xxxiii.). And again, "No word speaks John here, no word the other apostles, but held their peace, for James was invested with the chief rule." "He says well with authority, 'My sentence is' " (ibid.). A remarkable testimony against papal supremacy.*

Ver. 14.—*Symeon for Simeon, A.V.; rehearsed for declared, A.V.; first God for God at the first, A.V. Symeon. This is the only place (unless Symeon is the right reading in 2 Pet. i. 1) in which Simon Peter's name is given in this Hebrew form, which is most proper in the mouth of James speaking to Palestine Jews. Singularly enough, Chrysostom was misled by it, and thought the prophecy of Simeon in Luke i. 31 was meant. How first; corresponding to the "good while ago" of ver. 7. Did visit, etc. The construction ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν is very unusual, and indeed stands alone. The verb always has an accusative case after it (ch. vi. 3; vii. 23; xv. 36), unless Luke i. 68 is an exception, which, however, it hardly is. There are two ways of construing the phrase. One is to consider it as elliptical, and to supply, as the A.V. and R.V. do, τὰ ἐνθά. So Alford, who compares the construction in Luke i. 25, where ἐν ἐμῇ must be supplied. But this is a harsh construction. The other and better way is to take ἐπεσκέψατο, not in the sense of "visiting," but of "looking out," or "endeavouring to find something." The sense of the infinitive after the verb is nearly equivalent to "look out for and took," literally, *looked out how he might take*. With a slight modification of meaning, Irenæus (in 'Speaker's Commentary') renders it 'Excogitavit accipere,' "planned" or "contrived to take." A people for his Name; i.e. to be called by his Name. Λαός was the peculiar designation of "the people" of God, answering to the Hebrew עַם (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 10, Οἱ ποτὲ οὐ λαός, νῦν δὲ λαός Θεοῦ).*

Ver. 16.—*These things for this, A.V.; I will for will, A.V.; fallen for fallen down, A.V.*

Ver. 17.—*May for might, A.V.*

Ver. 18.—*Who maketh these things known, etc., for who doeth all these things (in ver. 17 of A.V.); known for known unto God are all his works, A.V. and T.R. Known from the beginning of the world. The above passage*

from Amos ix. 11, 12, is quoted, not very exactly, though with no change of sense, from the LXX., where it ends with the words, "saith the Lord, who doeth all these things," as in the A.V. But the LXX. in ver. 17 differs widely from the present Hebrew text. For whereas the Hebrew has, "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen that are called by my Name," the LXX. (Cod. Alex.) have, "Ὅπως ἀν' ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατὰλοιπεὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν Κύριον, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, κ.τ.λ., where it is evident that they read שׁוּק, seek after, for שׁוּק, possess, and שׁוּק, men, for שׁוּק, Edom. There is every appearance of the LXX., followed here by St. James, having preserved the true reading. As regards the reading of the R.V. in ver. 18, it is a manifest corruption. It is not the reading of either the Hebrew or the Greek version of Amos, or of any other version; and it makes no sense. Whereas the T.R., which is the reading of Irenæus (iii. xii.), as Meyer truly says, "presents a thought completely clear, pious, noble, and inoffensive as regards the connection," though he thinks that a reason for rejecting it. Nothing could be more germane to St. James's argument than thus to show from the words of Amos that God's present purpose of taking the Gentiles to be his people was, like all his other works, formed from the beginning of the world (comp. Eph. i. 9, 10; iii. 5, 6; 2 Tim. i. 9, etc.). As regards the interpretation of the prophecy of Amos intended, the idea seems to be that that apparent ruin of the house and family of David which culminated in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus would be followed by those "sure mercies of David," which consisted in his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation to the right hand of God, and the gathering in of the Gentiles to his kingdom. The phrase, "the tabernacle of David," is rather difficult, because the word in the Hebrew is מִדְּבַר דָּוִד, tabernacle or booth of David. It is the word used for the booths at the Feast of Tabernacles, and denotes a temporary shed of branches or the like of a very humble character. It is difficult to say why this word was used, unless it was to show that the house of David had fallen to a low estate before it was pulled down.

Ver. 19.—*Judgment for sentence, A.V. (ἐγὼ κρίνω); turn for are turned, A.V. (ἐπιστρέφουσιν). Judgment. Sentence is the best word, as expressing the decisive judgment of St. James, which, being delivered with the authority of his office at the close of the debate, carried with it the suffrages of the whole council. The things decreed by them were called τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκρίμενα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων. Turn.*



It applies to those that should hereafter turn as well as to those who were already turned.

Ver. 20.—*The pollutions for pollutions, A.V.; what is strangled for things strangled, A.V.* The pollutions. In the decree itself (ver. 29) this is explained by *εἰδωλοθότων*, things offered to idols, though some apply the "pollutions" to all the things here mentioned, not the idols only. Later St. Paul somewhat enlarged the liberty of Gentile converts in respect to meats offered to idols (see 1 Cor. viii. 4—13; x. 25—28). What is strangled, etc. The things forbidden are all practices not looked upon as sins by Gentiles, but now enjoined upon them as portions of the Law of Moses which were to be binding upon them, at least for a time, with a view to their living in communion and fellowship with their Jewish brethren. The necessity for some of the prohibitions would cease when the condition of the Church as regards Jews and Gentiles was altered; others were of eternal obligation.

Ver. 21.—*From generations of old for of old time, A.V.; sabbath for sabbath day, A.V.* The meaning of this verse seems to be that, in requiring the above compliances, the council was not enjoining anything new or strange, because the Gentiles who attended the synagogues were familiar with these Mosaic doctrines. It has been often stated that these four prohibitions were in substance the same as the so-called seven precepts of Noah, which were binding upon proselytes of the gate. This is, however, scarcely borne out by the facts. The four prohibitions seem to have been a temporary arrangement adapted to the then condition of the Church, with a view to enabling Christian Jews and Gentiles to live in brotherly fellowship. The Jew was not to require more of his Gentile brother: the Gentile was not to concede less to his Jewish brother. St. Augustine ('Cont. Manich.,' 32, 13), quoted by Meyer, ridicules the idea of Christians in his time being bound by the law of things strangled (see Hooker and Bishop Sanderson, quoted by Wordsworth, in the same sense).

Ver. 22.—*It seemed good to for pleased it, A.V.; the elders for elders, A.V.; to choose men out of their company and send them, etc., for to send chosen men of their own company, A.V.; Barsabbas for Barsabas, A.V. and T.R., as ch. i. 23. To choose men, etc.* This is a necessary change, because the middle aorist (*ἐκλεξαμένους*) cannot have a passive meaning (chosen); see ver. 40. Chief men (*ἡγούμενους*); literally, *leaders*. So in Luke xxii. 26 *ὁ ἡγούμενος* is rendered, "He that is chief." In Heb. xiii. 7, *Οἱ ἡγούμενοι ὑμῶν* is, "Them which have the rule over you;" your spiritual rulers Silas seems to be a

contraction of *Silvanus*, like *Lucas* for *Lucanus*. In the Acts he is always called Silas, in the Epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter, Silvanus. Going as direct emissaries from James and the Church of Jerusalem, Silas and Judas would have great weight with the Jews in Syria and Cilicia.

Ver. 23.—*Wrote thus by them for wrote letters by them after this manner, A.V.; the elder brethren for elders and brethren, A.V.; unto . . . greeting for send greeting unto, etc., A.V., as ch. xxiii. 26.* The elder brethren, etc. The grammar of the sentence is irregular, as there is nothing for *γράφαντες* to agree with. But "the elder brethren" is a phrase unknown to the Scriptures, and it is much more in accordance with the feeling of the times that "the brethren," i.e. the whole Church, should be included in the salutation. Greeting. It is remarkable that the only other place in the New Testament where this Greek salutation occurs is Jas. i. 1.

Ver. 24.—The words in the A.V. and the T.R., saying, *Ye must be circumcised and keep the Law*, are omitted in the R.T. and the R.V.; *commandment for such commandment, A.V.* The certain which went out from us are the same as the "certain men" which "came down from Judaea," of ver. 1. The word rendered subverting (*ἀνασκευδόντες*) occurs nowhere else in Scripture or in the LXX. It is spoken properly of a person who moves and carries off all the goods and furniture from the house which he is quitting. Hence to "disturb," "throw into confusion," "turn upside down," and the like. To whom we gave no commandment. Observe the distinct disavowal by James of having authorized those who went forth from him and the Jerusalem Church to require the circumcision of the Gentiles. The A.V. expresses the meaning most clearly.

Ver. 25.—*Having come to for being assembled with, A.V.; to choose out men and send them for to send chosen men, A.V.* (see note on ver. 22). Having come, etc. The Greek is capable of either meaning. Alford prefers that of the A.V. Others think that stress is laid upon the decree being unanimous. Our beloved Barnabas and Paul. James and the council thus gave their full and open support to Barnabas and Paul. Observe that Barnabas is named first, as in ver. 12.

Ver. 27.—*Themselves also shall for shall also, A.V.; by word of mouth for by mouth, A.V.* Judas and Silas (see ch. x. 7, note).

Ver. 28.—It seemed good, etc. The formula is remarkable. It implies the consciousness on the part of the council that they had "the mind of the Spirit;" but how this mind of the Spirit was communicated we are not expressly told. There may have been some "revelation," similar to that



recorded in ch. xiii. 2; x. 19; Gal. ii. 1, etc. It is, however, generally understood as resting upon Christ's promise to be with his Church always. Hefele ('Hist. of Christian Councils,' pp. 1, 2, English translation) quotes Cyprian as writing to Pope Cornelius in the name of the Council of A.D. 252: "Placuit nobis, Sancto Spiritu suggerente;" and the Synod of Arles as saying, "Placuit, præsentī Spiritu Sancto." And this is the general language of the synods. Constantine claimed for the decrees of the three hundred bishops at Nicæa the same authority as if they had been "solius Filii Dei sententia." But, as Bishop Wordsworth on ch. xv. 28 wisely says, "It cannot be held that councils of the Church now are entitled to adopt the words of the text in the framing of canons."

Ver. 29.—*Things sacrificed for meats offered, A.V.; it shall be well with you for ye shall do well, A.V.* The phrase *ἐὺ πρόσσειν* means to "prosper," to "fare well" (comp. Eph. vi. 21, "How I do").

Ver. 30.—*They, when they were dismissed, came down for when they were dismissed, they came, A.V.; having gathered for when they had gathered, A.V.* The multitude does not exactly express the idea of τὸ πλῆθος, which is the fulness or the whole of the body spoken of. Thus Luke i. 10, Πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ is "The whole congregation;" Luke ii. 13, Πλῆθος στρατιᾶς οὐρανίου is "The whole heavenly host;" Luke xix. 37, Ἄπαν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν, "The whole company of the disciples;" also ch. vi. 2 and iv. 32, Τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πιστευσάντων is "The whole company of believers;" ch. xxii. 36, Τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ is "The whole body of the people;" in ver. 12 of this chapter, Πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος is "The whole Church of Jerusalem." So here, Τὸ πλῆθος means "The whole Church."

Ver. 31.—*And when they had read it for which when they had read, A.V.*

Ver. 32.—*Bring themselves also prophets for being prophets also themselves, A.V.* Being themselves also prophets, exhorted, etc. Observe the connection of exhortation with prophecy, and compare the explanation of the name of Barnabas in ch. iv. 36, note. Confirmed them; ἐπιστήριξαν, as ver. 41 and ch. xiv. 22; xviii. 23. Nothing is so unsettling as controversy; but the preaching of these "chief men" brought back men's minds to the solid faith and hope of the gospel. How rich the Church of Antioch was at this time, with Paul and Barnabas, Judas and Silas, and probably Titus, and some, if not all, of those mentioned in ch. xiii. 1, for their teachers!

Ver. 33.—*Spent some time there for tarried there a space, A.V. (see ch. xviii. 23; xx. 3; Jas. iv. 13); dismissed for let go, A.V.;*

*those that had sent them forth for the apostles, A.V. and T.R.*

Ver. 34.—This verse is omitted in the R.T. and by the best manuscripts and commentators. It seems to have been put in to explain ver. 40. But Silas may have returned to Jerusalem, as stated in ver. 33, and come back again to Antioch, from having formed a strong attachment to St. Paul and his views.

Ver. 35.—*But Paul for Paul also, A.V.; tarried for continued, A.V.* It is at this time that Meyer and other commentators (see ver. 1, note) place Peter's visit to Antioch mentioned in Gal. ii. 11. But it is quite inconceivable that Peter, with all the influence of the Jerusalem Council fresh upon him, and after the part he himself took in it, and when his own emissaries, Silas and Judas, had just left Antioch, should act the part there ascribed to him. Nor is it within the region of probability that, so soon after the council, any should have come "from James" to unsay what James had said and written at the council. We may with much confidence place Peter's visit to Antioch before the council, as suggested in note to ver. 1.

Ver. 36.—*After some days for some days after, A.V.; return now for go again, A.V.; the brethren for our brethren, A.V. and T.R.; wherein we proclaimed for where we have preached, A.V.; fare for do, A.V.* After some days is hardly equivalent to μετὰ τινος ἡμέρας. The expression in Greek is quite indefinite as to time, and may cover months as well as days. That it does cover a considerable length of time we gather from the expression in ver. 33, that Judas and Silas "tarried some time at Jerusalem," followed by that in ver. 35, that after their departure "Paul and Barnabas tarried (διέτριβον) in Antioch." We can hardly suppose the two periods together to have included much less than a year. Let us return, etc. The singular loving care of Paul for his young converts appears here (comp. 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8; iii. 5—8; 2 Cor. i. 14, etc.).

Ver. 37.—*Was minded for determined, A.V. and T.R.; John also for John, A.V. and T.R.; who was called for whose surname was, A.V.* Was minded. It is doubtful which is the true reading, ἐβουλεύσατο or ἐβούλετο. The difference of meaning is small. The first means "took council with himself," i.e. planned, thought, to take Barnabas; the second, "wished," i.e. his deliberate will was to take Barnabas. Singularly enough, Alford, who rejects ἐβούλετο, which is the reading of R.T., translates ἐβουλεύετο by "was minded," which is the translation of ἐβούλετο in the R.V. We see in this choice of Mark by Barnabas the natural partiality of a near relation. We may also see the same flexibility of dispo-

sition which made him yield to the influence of the emissaries of James (Gal. ii. 13). Who was called. It might seem odd that this description of John should be repeated here after having been given in ch. xii. 25. But perhaps it was usual so to designate him (see Luke viii. 2; xxii. 3; Matt. x. 3; ch. i. 23; x. 6).

Ver. 38.—*Take with them him for take him with them, A.V.; withdrew for departed, A.V.* Withdrew. The Greek word ἀποστροφή (from which comes the substantive *apostasy*) is a strong one, and denotes decided blame, as does the indication of the opposite course, by way of contrast, which he did not take. "He did not go with them to the work" to which God called them, as he ought to have done. The whole phrase, too, which follows is strongly worded. "Paul thought good," as regards one who had turned back from the work, "not to take that man." The μὴ συμπαράλαβεῖν of ver. 38 is, as Meyer observes, sharply opposed to the συμπαράλαβεῖν of ver. 37. Luke evidently sides strongly with Paul, and almost reproduces the *ipsissima verba* of the "sharp contention." One would infer that this passage was penned by Luke before the reconciliation which appears in 2 Tim. iv. 11, and that we have here an indication of the early date of the publication of "The Acts." Perhaps also there is an indication in the narrative, coupled with Mark's subsequent attachment to Peter, that Mark rather leant at this time to Judaizing views, and that his previous departure "from the work" was partly owing to a want of complete sympathy with St. Paul's doctrine. St. Paul would have no half-hearted helper in his grand and arduous work.

Ver. 39.—*There arose a sharp contention for the contention was so sharp between them, A.V. and T.R.; parted for departed, A.V.; so that for so sharp . . . that, A.V.; and Barnabas for and so Barnabas, A.V.; took Mark with him for took Mark, A.V.; sailed away for sailed, A.V.* There arose a sharp contention, etc. The sense "between them" must be supplied, if the English word "contention" is used. The word *παροξυσμός* only occurs twice in the New Testament: once in Heb. x. 24, in a good sense, "To provoke" (for a provocation)—"stimulate or excite"—"unto love and good works," which is its common classical sense; the other time in this passage, where the sense is attributed to it in which it is used in the LXX., as in Deut. xxix. 28, Ἐν θυμῷ καὶ ὀργῇ καὶ παροξυσμῷ μεγάλῳ σφόδρα, "in great indignation;" and in Jer. xxxii. 37 (xxxix. 37, LXX.), coupled with the same words, ἐν παροξυσμῷ μεγάλῳ, "in great wrath;" answering to *qar* in Hebrew. But it is more probable

that St. Luke uses the word here in its common medical sense. In medical writers—Galen, Hippocrates, etc.—the *παροξυσμός* is equivalent to what we call an *access*, from the Latin *accessio*, used by Celsus, when a disease of some standing takes a turn for the worse, comes to a height, and breaks out into its severest form. This is the sense in which our English word "paroxysm" is used. The meaning of the passage will then be that, after a good deal of uncomfortable feeling and discussion, the difference between Paul and Barnabas, instead of cooling down, broke out into such an acute form that Barnabas went off to Cyprus with Mark, leaving St. Paul to do what he pleased by himself. And Barnabas, etc. The R.V. is much more accurate. The consequence of the quarrel is said by St. Luke to have been that Barnabas took Mark off with him to Cyprus. The statement that Paul chose Silas is a separate and independent statement, as appears by Παῦλος (in the nominative) and ἐξῆλθε in the indicative mood. St. Luke's narrative quite sides with St. Paul, and throws the blame of the quarrel, or at least of the separation, upon Barnabas. Renan ('St. Paul,' p. 119) thinks St. Paul was too severe upon John Mark, and that it was ungrateful of him to break with one to whom he owed so much as he did to Barnabas for any cause of secondary importance. He also thinks that the real root of the quarrel lay in the constantly changing relations between the two apostles, aggravated by a domineering spirit in St. Paul. But the force of this censure turns upon the question whether it was a cause of secondary importance. If St. Paul had a single eye to the success of his mission, and judged that Mark would be a hindrance to it, it was a question of primary importance to "the work," and St. Paul was right. Renan also remarks upon the extinction of the fame of Barnabas consequent upon this separation from his more illustrious companion. "While Paul kept advancing to the heights of his glory, Barnabas, separated from the companion who had shed a portion of his own lustre upon him, pursued his solitary course in obscurity." Sailed away. Cyprus was Barnabas's native country (ch. iv. 36), and the scene of the earliest mission (ch. xi. 19), and of Paul and Barnabas's first joint evangelistic labours (ch. xiii. 4). Barnabas would have many friends there, and could form plans at his leisure for his future action. The friendly mention of him in 1 Cor. ix. 6 shows both that he continued his disinterested labours as an apostle and that the estrangement between him and St. Paul had passed away. The *paroxysm* had yielded to the gentle treatment of charity.

**Ver. 40.**—*But for and, A.V.; went forth for departed, A.V.; commended for recommended, A.V.; to for unto, A.V.; the Lord for God, A.V. and T.R. Chose Silas.* If ver. 34 of the T.R. is a true reading, it accounts for the presence of Silas at Antioch. Otherwise there is no difficulty in supposing that Silas, attracted by the holy zeal of St. Paul and by desire to work among the Gentiles, had come back to Antioch after giving account to the apostles at Jerusalem of the success of his mission with Judas to the Churches at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.

**Ver. 41.**—*Syria and Cilicia (see ver. 23).* This rather looks as if the "some days after" of ver. 36 did not cover a very long time, because the special mention of "the Churches of Syria and Cilicia" indicates that St. Paul's visit had some connection

with the epistle addressed to them by the apostles and elders of the Church of Jerusalem (ver. 23), as we see from ch. xvi. 4 was the case. Confirming; as ch. xiv. 22; xv. 32; xviii. 22 (T.R.). In the passive voice ἐπιστηρίζομαι means to "lean upon," as in 2 Sam. i. 6, LXX., and in classical Greek. Renan thus indicates their probable route: "They travelled by land northwards across the plain of Antioch, went through the 'Syrian Gates,' coasted the gulf of the Issus, crossed the northern branch of the Issus through the 'Amanéan Gates,' then, traversing Cilicia, went perhaps through Tarsus, crossed Mount Taurus through the 'Cilician Gates,' one of the most terrible passes in the world, and thus reached Lycaonia, going as far as Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium" ('St. Paul,' p. 123).

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—35.**—*The controversy.* The apprehension of truth, full, pure, and unmixed with error, should be the desire of all good men. And it is a great help towards attaining truth when we are able to love it and to seek it absolutely for its own sake, without reference to its consequences, without regard to the wishes of others or undue submission to their opinions. It is also necessary for a man in pursuit of truth to divest himself of prejudices, and the influence of false opinions which he has adopted from habit, and without due consideration. The mind should approach the consideration of truth unwarped and uncoloured by any subjective influences except the love of God and innocence of character. Divested of prejudices and of passions, and possessed of adequate knowledge, the mind would receive moral and religious truth with nearly as much certainty as it does mathematical problems. The object of controversy should be to clear away all prejudice, all ignorance, all passion, every groundless opinion and prepossession, which stand in the way of the acceptance of truth. And controversialists should be ready to admit the probability that those who differ most widely from them may, for that very reason, see some side of truth which is hidden from their own eyes, and therefore should be ready to give a candid consideration to their arguments. The controversy which is described in its origin, progress, and settlement, in the passage before us, is an instructive one. We see on the side of the Judaizing party the types of the hindrances constantly existing to the reception of new truths. There was at first a blind and indiscriminate attachment to old opinions. They had been brought up in the belief that the Mosaic institutions were unchangeable. The very suggestion of a modification of them was treason against Moses and against God. They had been brought up in the belief that they were exclusively the people of God. All the pride and selfishness of their hearts rebelled against the idea of others being admitted to an equality of privileges with themselves. They had cherished a contempt and hatred for all other nations of the earth: how could they believe that those nations were as much objects of the love of God as they themselves were? Again, they had fattened in the opinion of their own righteousness, of their own moral superiority over other people: how could they be willing to accept a gospel which taught them that they could only be justified by grace, and that they must seek that grace on a level with all other sinners, through the merits of Jesus Christ? Again, their reverence for their rabbis and great men, and for their sayings and teaching, which they were accustomed to lean upon with a certain superstitious awe, and to quote with a proud fondness, was another hindrance to the reception of the gospel in its integrity by them. And all these influences, good and bad, concurred to close the eyes of their reason against all opposing evidence. They would, indeed, admit a Christianity which left the Law of Moses intact, and obliged all Christians to become Jews, so to speak. That exalted



their nation, flattered their pride, increased their self-importance, left the prejudices of their childhood undisturbed. But the gospel as preached by Paul they could not and would not accept. The controversy on the other side was waged with fairness and firmness combined. St. Paul's large experience, both of the prejudices of his opponents, which he had once felt himself in their full power, and of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which had been manifested to him in so remarkable a manner, gave him an unrivalled command of the argument. He had as much reverence for Moses, as full a conviction of the Divine origin of the Law, of the inspiration of the prophets, and of the infallible authority of Holy Scripture, as his opponents had. But he had a deep insight into the doctrines of grace, borne witness to by the Law and the prophets, which they had not. He saw the harmony between the Old and New Testaments; how the Law was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ; how Christ was the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believes; and how in the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ the Law was not destroyed, but fulfilled. He had, therefore, a full certainty as to the main points of the controversy which others had not. And yet he was tender and considerate toward his opponents (Gal. iv. 19), and brought, not abuse, but argument to bear against their errors; as in the two wonderful Epistles, to the Galatians and to the Romans. And in a similar spirit we find him here willing to refer the matters in dispute to the Church at Jerusalem, presided over as it was by James, who had the credit of leaning to the side of his antagonists. But combined with this gentleness we have to mark his unflinching firmness and boldness. It required no small courage and strength of conviction to withstand a person of such weight and authority as Peter, and to reprove him before the Church. It required no little heroism to go into the very stronghold of Judaism, and there, before James, and Peter, and the Pharisees, and the most Judaizing members of the Churches of Judæa, to proclaim the gospel of the free grace of God (Gal. ii. 2; ch. xv. 12), and the free admission of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ. And let us mark the result. All the true-hearted men were won by Paul's way. Peter recovered from his weakness and openly sided with Paul; James threw his great weight unequivocally into the same scale; Barnabas shook off his momentary hesitation; the whole assembly gave a unanimous vote in favour of Paul's view; and the Church was saved from disruption. In an age when the peace of the Church is so much disturbed by controversy, and when such violence, both of language and of action, is indulged in by those who wish to enforce their own views, it is important to study carefully the history of this first great and trying controversy, which threatened at one time to split the Church to its very foundations, but which was brought to such a happy issue, under the blessing of God, by the wisdom, charity, and firmness of the apostle to the Gentiles. God grant, of his tender mercy, a like spirit to the leaders of party in our own days, and a no less happy settlement of the questions which separate brother from brother, and impede the progress of Christian truth.

**Vers. 36—41.—*The paroxysm.*** The proposal of two friends whose fast friendship was of many years' standing; of two brethren loving and beloved; of two apostles of Jesus Christ, who had long laboured together to win souls to Christ and to advance the kingdom of God, and who had achieved together the most signal triumphs over the powers of darkness, who had suffered together, who had undergone the most appalling dangers together, who had stuck by one another under every circumstance of trial and difficulty;—the proposal, I say, of two such men to start together on a new errand of love, might have seemed to be the very last occasion likely to produce contention and strife. Alas! for the infirmity of our poor fallen nature, that any evil should arise from purposes so good and holy. The faithful, truthful record of the sacred history in our text suggests much caution and many useful lessons for Christian practice. 1. There was perfect agreement between the two apostles as to the end in view—the revisiting the Churches they had planted for the purpose of confirming them in the faith of Jesus Christ. As far as we know, they were both of one mind, both equally desirous of advancing the kingdom of God, both equally ready to spend and be spent for the Name of the Lord Jesus and for the spread of his gospel in the world. Thus far we may well believe that their communications on the subject of the new mission were carried on in perfect harmony and love, because there was in each a single eye and an unmixed motive, viz. the glory of Christ. 2. The difference arose when Barnabas proposed

that they should take John Mark as their companion. Here we seem to detect the entrance in of human motives. His partiality for his cousin; possibly the feeling that his own softer character needed the support of a steady ally to enable him to hold his own against the strength of Paul's will; possibly too some leaning towards the Jewish party in the Church, or at least an unwillingness to offend them,—made him blind to the inconvenience of taking a half-hearted companion with them. He was consulting with flesh and blood, and not with the Spirit of God, when he made the suggestion. We can imagine that Paul objected at first with mildness, and pointed out the evils that might arise. He would dwell upon the vital interests of the mission, the dangers and difficulties of the work, the insufficient guarantee that John Mark's constancy would be equal to the task. It is, of course, possible, though it does not appear, that Paul may have judged Mark somewhat severely, or may have urged his objections without all the tenderness that was due to the feelings of Barnabas. But there is not the slightest evidence that this was so. Probably at first he hoped to persuade Barnabas to give up his project. Probably Barnabas hoped so to state his wish to reinstate John Mark that Paul might give way. But when these hopes broke down on either side, then gradually, no doubt, the discussion assumed a growing tone of asperity, till at length the paroxysm came on. Barnabas cut the discussion short by turning upon his heel, and separating himself from his old companion and friend, and going forth in self-will with his cousin to Cyprus. The old partnership with Paul was dissolved, and nothing remained for Paul to do but to choose another missionary companion, and pursue his project in sadness. We cannot doubt that the peace and joy of both apostles was clouded by this unfortunate episode. But St. Paul had probably the testimony of his conscience that he had acted from the purest motives, and, from the friendly mention of Barnabas alluded to in the note to ver. 39, we may hope that, when the paroxysm had subsided, the old relations between the two brethren were restored to their former footing of cordiality and love. But the great practical lesson we learn is the importance of keeping our motives of action pure and simple. We must try and not allow our judgment to be clouded by partialities and personal influences of any kind. We must endeavour never to subordinate the great interests of the Church and of the gospel to any private feelings or wishes, however innocent in themselves. And even right feelings and reasonable wishes must be so kept under control as never to overflow the banks of reason and of charity, and never to injure the great cause of the gospel of Christ, to which they ought always to be made subservient. Generally, the narrative of this paroxysm enforces the wise words of St. James, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Jas. i. 20, 21).

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—11.—A grave crisis in the kingdom of God: lessons.** The crisis of the kingdom will be found in the life of the Divine Leader of the faith. In those hours when all that was human in him shrank from the sufferings and sorrows which were before him, or from the agony which was upon him, or from the darkness which enshrouded him, then was "the crisis of the world" and of the kingdom of God on earth. But this also was a crisis, grave and serious. If the Church at Antioch had yielded to these "false brethren" (Gal. ii. 4), when they came to invade its liberty; or if—a much greater peril—the Church at Jerusalem had decided in favour of the Judaizers, and had passed a sentence that circumcision was necessary to salvation; and if Christian truth had thus been narrowed to the small dimensions of a mere adjunct to Judaism, where would Christianity have been to-day? From the incident here related we draw the lessons—

**I. WHAT HARM ZEALOTRY MAY TRY TO DO.** These men "who came down from Judæa" (ver. 1) were members of the Pharisaic party "*which believed*" (ver. 5); they were formal adherents of the Christian faith; they spake reverently of Christ, and believed themselves to be acting in the interests of his kingdom. Yet we know that they were taking a course which, if they had carried their point, would have simply extinguished the faith in a few years. Often, since then, has blind zealotry done its best to bring about a condition which would have proved fatal to the cause of God and of redeemed humanity.

**II. IN WHAT UNINVITING LABOURS FIDELITY MAY INVOLVE US.** How different from evangelizing risks and toils, and from the fraternal intercourse which followed these, how much beneath both the one and the other, how much more uninviting this controversy with false brethren, narrow-minded, mistaking a rite whose significance was exhausted for an essential of salvation! How uncongenial to the spirit of the apostle this "dissension and disputation" (ver. 2)! But it was necessary; it was as much a part of their bounden duty and their loyal obedience to their Lord as the preaching of the gospel or the inditing of an Epistle. The Christian workman cannot always choose his work. He must sometimes give up the congenial for the unpleasant, the inviting for the repellent.

**III. HOW WELL TO ENCOURAGE THE FAITHFUL IN THE HOUR OF THEIR ANXIETY.** Those who constituted the deputation were "brought on their way by the Church" (ver. 3). In the profound anxiety which must have filled the sagacious and earnest mind of Paul at this critical juncture, such gracious attention on the part of the Church must have been exceedingly refreshing. No "moral support" of tried and anxious leaders, in times of supreme solicitude, is thrown away; it is well-spent time and trouble.

**IV. THAT IT IS SOMETIMES OUR DUTY TO TAKE INTO CONSULTATION OUR BRETHREN IN A HIGHER POSITION.** The Church at Antioch was not obliged to consult that at Jerusalem; the latter had no jurisdiction entitling it to decide the disputes of the former. But it was becoming and it was wise, and therefore it was right, to refer the matter in dispute to "the Church [of Jerusalem] and the apostles and the elders" (vers. 4, 6). Often when no written constitution obliges us to refer to authorities, it is a matter of practical wisdom, and therefore of rectitude, to go outside our own "body" and submit our case to those in high repute. We may gain far more than we lose thereby.

**V. THE TEACHING OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE.** (Vers. 7—9.) Peter would not have taken the side he took now had not his eyes been opened by the event in which he had borne so large and so honourable a share (ch. x.). We should grow more charitable and more large-minded as we grow in years.

**VI. THE FREEDOM OF THE GOSPEL FROM ALL BURDENSOME IMPOSTS.** (Ver. 10.) Why tempt God by putting on the neck of the disciples an intolerable yoke? Why invite defeat? Why multiply difficulty and ensure disappointment by requiring of the whole Gentile world a conformity which they will not render and which God does not demand? Why make burdensome the yoke which the Master himself made easy (Matt. xi. 30)? The gospel of his grace was meant to be a source of blessedness and deliverance; how incensate the folly of tying to it any institutes which would make it become an insufferable vexation!

**VII. THE ESSENCE OF THE ORDINANCE.** Circumcision was but the outward sign of admission to the privilege and obligation of the Law. The Law was but the schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. Those, then, who were saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 11) had the very essence and substance of which the old Jewish rite was but the sign and symbol (Phil. iii. 3; Rom. ii. 28, 29).—C.

**Vers. 12—35.—A grave crisis in the kingdom of God: more lessons.** After Peter's speech (vers. 7—10) came the narration of facts by Barnabas and Paul, in which they laid stress on the Divine tokens of favour and support which they had received in the execution of their work (ver. 12); and then James summed up the matter, evidently giving voice to the decision of the Church. We learn—

**I. THAT MEN OF DIVERGENT THOUGHT SHOULD STRIVE TO MEET ONE ANOTHER'S VIEWS IN CHRISTIAN COUNCIL.** Probably it would be hard to find two good men of any age or country who have taken more divergent views of the gospel of Christ than did James and Paul. Their Epistles show us how they viewed the one truth from separate and even distant standpoints. Had they come to this Church meeting intent on magnifying their own distinctive points, there would have ensued bitter conflict and fatal rupture. But they strove to meet one another, and the end was peace and the furtherance of redeeming truth.

**II. THAT AN EQUITABLE COMPROMISE MAY BE THE MOST HONOURABLE SETTLEMENT.** (Vers. 19—21.) In concession to the Gentile party, it was not required that they should submit to the distinctive rite; in concession to the Jewish party, it was required that certain statutes should be observed by them. Occasions will very frequently occur



when each side owes it to the other to make concession. The spirit that strives only for victory is not the spirit of Christ. We should, as his disciples, count it an honour and a joy to concede, when we conscientiously can do so, to Christian brethren who differ from us.

**III. THAT WE MAY LEAVE UNIMPORTANT MATTERS TO THE SETTLEMENT OF TIME.** The particular precepts which James and those who thought with him desired to have enforced have long since disappeared. Their observance at the time was expedient, for Moses had in every city them that preached him, etc. (ver. 21). But when the special reasons for conformity were removed, then they fell through. Where the peace of a Church or a large Christian community is at stake, we do well to accept small matters which are unessential; time is on our side.

**IV. THAT CHRISTIANITY HAS PURIFIED AND PROPORTIONED PUBLIC MORALS.** It surprises and shocks us to read of abstinence from meat which had been offered to idols, and from things strangled, being placed side by side with abstinence from the sin of fornication, as if, in morals, these things stood on the same level. We feel that the latter is a thing so utterly and inherently bad that the former is not at all comparable with it in heinousness of offence. The fact is that we think thus because our holy religion has purified our thoughts, and taught us to see ceremonial and moral offences in true perspective. But wherever Christianity has been corrupted, where the traditions of men have overlaid its simplicity with their ceremonialism, we find this defective view prevailing. It was necessary, at that time and in the then condition of the world, formally and expressly to disallow a custom which we now shudder at and shrink from as a shameful sin.

**V. THAT DECISIONS, WHEN ONCE ATTAINED, SHOULD BE COURTEOUSLY AND CAREFULLY CARRIED OUT.** (Vers. 22—33.) The Church at Jerusalem, though on the main point it had yielded to the Church at Antioch, did not give way sulkily or grudgingly. It did not dismiss the deputation with a cold and formal resolution. It sent able and influential men, with letters, to accompany Paul and Barnabas, and these greeted the Syrian Church and laid the matter fully before them. So that, in the end, the two communities understood one another and rejoiced in one another the more. What is done in Christ's name and cause should be done with utmost courtesy and with perfect thoroughness.

**VI. THAT WE MAY REST HAPPY IN THE ALL-SEEING WISDOM AND ALL-EMBRACING LOVE OF GOD.** (Vers. 14—18.) James intimated that what was then happening was only the fulfilment of the Divine intention. God knew from the beginning what he should accomplish, and he purposed the recovery and redemption of the whole Gentile world. 1. When we are baffled by the perplexities of the way, let us remember that all things are in the hands of the omniscient One. 2. When we are distressed by the disappointments and difficulties of our work, let us be consoled by thinking that God means to restore mankind; his wisdom and his love will prevail, though we see not our way and though our fears abound.—C.

Ver. 26.—*Self-sacrifice for Christ.* There are two classes of men of whom we are reminded by these words of the Jerusalem Church.

**I. THOSE WHO ARE READY TO SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES FOR ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING BUT THE BEST AND HIGHEST.** The soldier for victory; the sportsman for excitement; the explorer for the gratification of curiosity; the Alpine climber for credit; the artist for fame; the sailor for love of the sea, etc. There is no lack of men who risk life for something. But we have to consider that while (1) there is a touch of nobility in some of these cases which wins our admiration; yet (2) often the end is not worth the sacrifice,—life and all that life means to its holder and to those who are related to him and dependent on him are too precious to be parted with for a slight object, too valuable to be sacrificed for any but a serious and great end. And (3) when thus lost, it is often laid down from instinct or passion rather than from principle. There is something essentially unsatisfactory in it; for it is a material loss with no corresponding gain. It brings sadness to the heart, loneliness and misery to the home, and does not bring adequate consolation to the mind.

**II. THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THE HIGHEST AND THE BEST BUT SACRIFICE LITTLE OR NOTHING TO IT.** We should, perhaps, say to him; for: 1. The highest and best meet in



a living One, even Jesus Christ. It is, indeed, to honour his Name (see text), but it is also and chiefly to exalt and extol *him* and make him very high (Isa. lii. 13) in the estimation and affection of the world, that his servants strive and suffer. 2. Ourselves and all that we have are his due; therefore *our lives*, when he asks us to lay them down at his feet. 3. There are those who recognize his claim, but do not comply with his desire. There are those who *do*; men that have hazarded their lives for Jesus Christ, from Paul and Barnabas down to our own Christian martyrs; men and women who, on various fields of holy, daring, and heroic suffering, have cheerfully sacrificed all to honour him and do his bidding; but there are too many that acknowledge the validity of his claim but do not respond to his call. There are in our congregations and even in our Churches (1) men who withhold themselves from missionary or ministerial service, because, though well fitted for it, they are not prepared to make the necessary sacrifices; (2) men that will not step into the breach when some other kind of holy activity is demanded, because they shrink from the burdens or the annoyances it will entail; (3) men that will not encourage some good work of Christ, because, to do so, they must part with that which the world counts precious. These are far from being numbered with the "good and faithful servants."—C.

**Vers. 36—41.—Apostles at fault.** When a grave and critical juncture had been safely passed without damage done to any, there arose a quarrel about an unimportant and insignificant matter, which had regrettable, not to say deplorable, results. The heart of the earnest and affectionate Paul yearned to know how their converts fared in "every city where they had preached the Word of the Lord" (ver. 36). Barnabas immediately acquiesced in Paul's proposal to visit them; everything promised another useful mission journey, in which the calmer and more genial qualities of the one man would supplement the intenser and more vehement characteristics of the other. But there arose a question as to companionship, which wrecked their agreement to work in one another's company, and which separated the two friends for life. Barnabas wished to take Mark, and would not abandon his desire; Paul would not consent to take him: "and the contention was so sharp . . . that they departed asunder" (ver. 39). We learn from this incident—

I. THAT AN ACT OF MORAL WEAKNESS MAY HAVE FAR LONGER AND MORE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES THAN WE CAN POSSIBLY FORESEE. Could Mark have foreseen that his desertion of the cause in Pamphylia would have led to the lifelong separation of his uncle from Paul, he would probably have remained with them, and "fulfilled the work," even as they did. But he did not reckon on after consequences. It is well for us to consider that our acts of minor wrong-doing, of moral weakness, of spiritual shortcoming, may do an amount of mischief from the commission of which we should shrink with dismay if we could only look it in the face.

II. THAT BETWEEN THE TWO APOSTLES A DECIDED AND REGRETTABLE FAULT WAS COMMITTED. Their intention to work together in the cause of Christ need not and should not have been broken off by their disagreement. They ought either to have compromised the matter by mutual concession, or one of the two should have yielded to the other. Paul owed too much to Barnabas to be justified in pushing his own will to the point of separation. Barnabas owed too much to Paul to make it right for him to insist so pertinaciously on his particular desire. One should have yielded if the other would not. It was an unedifying, unseemly, unchristian thing for two apostles to throw up a plan on which they had sought Divine direction, and which must have received the sanction of the Church, because they could not agree on a matter of detail. They must both have lived to regret it. Men in prominent positions, and those who are engaged in great matters, are bound to be above such unseemliness of behaviour. Either (1) the *ingenuity of love* should devise a middle way, or (2) the *sacrificial spirit of love* should yield the point altogether.

III. THAT IN EACH CASE THE FAULT COMMITTED WAS THE SHADOW OF HIS OWN PARTICULAR EXCELLENCY. Probably both of the apostles were blameworthy. But so far as Paul was to be condemned, his failure was the shadow of his intensity. Such was the entirety of his devotedness, such the intensity of his zeal, such the strenuousness of his soul, that he could not brook anything which looked like half-heartedness. And so far as Barnabas was to blame, his fault was the shadow of his kind-heartedness,

his willingness to give another chance to a young man, his reluctance to exclude from noble service a man who had made one mistake. Each was animated by a commendable spirit, though each may have gone too far in his own course. Often when we unsparingly condemn, it would be well to remind ourselves and others that the faults of good men are usually but the shadow of their virtues.

IV. THAT GOD JUDGES THE GOOD BY THEIR ABIDING SPIRIT, AND NOT BY THEIR OCCASIONAL DISPOSITIONS: so also should we. These two men were not the less servants of God, ambassadors of Jesus Christ, because they were betrayed into temporary ill humour. God appraised them by their essential, abiding spirit of love and devotion; he forgave their passing ebullition. In the same way we must take care to estimate men, not by an occasional outburst which is not really characteristic and is no true criterion, but by the "spirit of their mind"—that which really shapes and colours their life and character.

V. THAT THIS FAULT OF THE APOSTLES HAD, AS BECAME THE MEN, A CHRISTIAN ENDING. Paul afterwards wrote kindly of Barnabas, and actually sent for Mark, declaring that he was "profitable for [the] ministry" (2 Tim. iv. 11). The sun should not go down upon our wrath. If any man has a quarrel against any, he is to "forbear and to forgive" (Col. iii. 13).—C.

Vers. 1—5.—*The Judaizers at Antioch.* There must needs be heresies, that is, divisions and separations of opinion, in order that that which is approved may be made manifest. In conflicts of this kind, the chaff of falsehood is sifted from the genuine wheat of truth.

I. THE POSITION OF THE JUDAIZERS. 1. It was a reactionary position. It aimed at the re-establishment of circumcision as the condition of salvation. This was going back from the "spirit" to the "flesh," from the principle of an internal to that of an external religion. It was substituting works for faith, doing for being, as the condition of salvation. 2. It was a revolutionary position. Such a claim convulses the very heart of the Christian Church. Wherever it has come up, a deep mark has been left in history. This was essentially the conflict of Isaiah and other prophets against the ceremonialists of the day. The question came up again at the Reformation. Law or gospel—Moses or Christ? Behind this question lies a world. Is religion stationary and stagnant or ideal, Divine, and possessed of the power of an expansive and endless life?

II. THE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THE RAISING OF THE QUESTION. 1. *Private dissension.* Alas! often is it so. The loving missionary comrades, Paul and Barnabas, are disunited. But we must remember, "Though Plato is my friend, truth is my friend still more." Paul felt that evangelical freedom was threatened (Gal. ii. 4). And the gospel was dearer to him than life. Truth must not be compromised in the supposed interests of friendship. Indeed, the supposition is illusory. For if it be "a strong and habitual inclination in two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other," this cannot be at the expense of truth. 2. *Public discussion.* The difference between Paul and Barnabas could not be ignored. The topic must have been on the tongue of every one. See how good comes out of controversy as well as evil. Private pain is often the condition of public blessing. A cloud comes between two minds, but the truth shines presently the more brightly forth.

III. THE ACTION OF THE CHURCH. They resolved to despatch Paul and Barnabas to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Note the *appropriateness* of this decision. 1. As to the men sent—Paul representing the Gentiles and the missionary work, Barnabas the Church at Antioch. Besides, from Gal. ii. 1, *et seq.*, we see that St. Paul had a special inward direction to proceed thither. 2. The destination. Jerusalem, the mother city and the mother Church, and the seat of apostolic authority. Yet Antioch was probably not second to Jerusalem in numbers and influence. Without debating questions of Church government, the lesson may be drawn that no particular community should act for itself in important questions without consulting the general sense of the Christian Church.

IV. THE JOURNEY AND ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM. 1. They had a conduct from the Church of Antioch as they set forth—an expression of confidence in the men, and of deep interest in the result. Said the electoral Prince of Brandenburg to his envoy,



proceeding to a conference with the papists, "Bring me the little word *sola*, i.e. faith *only*, back—or come not back at all!" 2. They told good news on the way. They told of the conversion of the heathen, and the news was received with great joy. Here was a great argument for Paul, gathered on the way. So does God solve our disputes in words by the irresistible logic of his facts. 3. At Jerusalem they tell the great things God has done for them. The facts of the past are prophetic of the future. Divine mercy as an historical fact is the basis of sure hope and confidence. The term of devout recollection and thanksgiving fits the mind for the view of present duties.—J.

**Vers. 6—21.—The council at Jerusalem.** The claim of the Judaizers is sharply and absolutely put. Circumcision is a necessity; the Law of Moses must be observed. The whole question is open, and the air is full of debate.

**I. DISCOURSE OF PETER.** 1. The question whether the Mosaic Law is binding upon the heathen or no is referred by him to *experience*. This is the great guide of all. In no case may it be neglected. In every case recurrence to it as a whole will be found helpful. Now, at Cæsarea it was clear that the Gentiles, no less than the Jewish Christians, had received the Holy Spirit. This fact the apostle considers to be significant proof that God had already decided the question in debate. God, he had before learned, was no "respector of persons." Here he expresses the same truth by saying that God has made no difference between them; has placed the two upon one footing. He has testified to the Gentiles by imparting to them the Holy Spirit, his grace and good pleasure. 2. The reference to immediate experience leads to the larger reference to history—the history of the sacred past. The entire revelation of God in both testaments rests on history and consists in history. Christ "lived his doctrine and preached his life." And the living experience of prophets and apostles offers a rich fund of instruction. Paul's doctrine is his own life translated into consciousness and knowledge. And the doctrine of Peter is his own life wrought out in views of duty and principles of Christian thought. Christian doctrine is the expression of the results of Christian history. The discourse of Peter evidently produces a great impression. Silence follows, broken only by the voices of Barnabas and Paul, who relate the significant occurrences which have befallen among the heathen.

**II. DISCOURSE OF JAMES.** 1. He, like a true Jew, trained in ear and memory by the prophetic oracles, reverts to them, and finds confirmation there of the views wrought out in the minds of the others by the certain discipline of experience. The writings of the prophets were used by the apostles as a guide to the interpretation of the signs of the present, and for directions as to present duty. Now, the oracle from Amos adduced by James refers in the first instance to the house of David. His royal house is fallen into ruins. But God would raise it up out of the ruins, would restore and extend it among the Gentiles among whom his Name shall be known—that is, among those who shall decide to acknowledge and serve him. All this God would bring about in accordance with his eternal designs (ver. 18). 2. Here, then, is light on the question of debate. Observe that the theocracy, the kingdom of God, stands in the centre of the promise, and not the Law as such. Further, the "calling on the Name of God" is laid down as the condition or incorporation with the kingdom of God. This condition has been already fulfilled by the converted heathen. Lastly, it is "the Lord who doeth these things." It is not our short-sighted counsel and prudence which have to make new history and new laws, but God has promised that he will do it. Already has he adopted a people out of the heathen (ver. 14). If, then—this is the argument of James—we should lay a burden on the Gentile Christians, this would be going against the teaching of facts, striving against the current of history, thwarting the will of God therein revealed. 3. The decision of James. He would not have the Gentile Christians harassed, who are turning in repentance and good works to God. He would recognize their evangelical freedom; would reject the demands of the Pharisaic party; in this he fully, though on different grounds, coincides with Paul. At the same time he insists on certain moral and ceremonial abstinences. The whole illustrates the mild, gentle, and loving character of this apostle. There was in him, with the greatest strictness towards himself, the most compassionate love to others. Unceasingly in the temple, on his knees, he prayed for forgiveness for his people (Eusebius, 'Ecc. Hist.,' ii. 23). He who loves his own household best will be the kindest to them without.

The patriot is the true philanthropist; the loyal adherent of his Church the best of universal Christianity and progress.—J.

Vers. 22—29.—*Decision of the council at Jerusalem.* This, the first council of the Church, is generally considered an example for all times.

I. AN EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE. 1. In the selection of emissaries. It had reference partly to the Churches, partly to Paul and Barnabas. The Churches were assured that the emissaries were not delivering their own private opinion, but the deliberate judgment of the Church. And the apostles had the legitimacy and purity of their office sealed by the highest Church authority.

II. AN EXAMPLE OF BROTHERLY LOVE AND WISDOM. Without the taking of some such step, the Judaizers in Antioch and elsewhere would remain unchecked, and left to pursue their disturbing and factious intrigues. And by this step a new bond of sympathy and affection was established between Jew and Gentile, between Jerusalem and the world.

III. AN EXAMPLE OF INSPIRED ACTION. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." The words may be abused or used with genuine devout feeling. The Holy Spirit is the Source of light and wisdom in the mind—the Judge and Decider in spiritual things. The conclusion of a matter, discussed by the faithful in the light of the Holy Spirit, may justly be looked upon as the decision of the Holy Spirit. The whole stamp of the message is spiritual, impressive, full of Christian piety and love. Its closing word, promising blessing on the conditions laid down, is far better than a threat of pains on disobedience would have been. The Christian "Farewell!" contains not only the wish for a brother's happiness, but that he may abide in Christ, and walk as he walked in the world.—J.

Vers. 30—34.—*Effects of the mission from the Church.* The few words of the decision gave rise to a large joy and consolation at Antioch. Let us generalize this.

I. THE GOSPEL BRINGS PEACE TO TROUBLED HEARTS. Freedom from the yoke of the Law only truly to be enjoyed by those who have previously smarted and groaned beneath that yoke.

II. IT UNITES THE SOULS OF BELIEVERS IN PEACE. Judas and Silas, by the exercise of their prophetic gifts, exhorted and strengthened the brethren. The faithful teacher's heart is in his element in bringing souls to the Saviour.

III. IT LEADS IN PEACE TOWARDS THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM, TO THE MOTHER CHURCH ABOVE. They were sent with peace from the brethren to those who sent them forth. All interchange of love on earth, all messages of reconciliation, are prophetic of and prepare for the home of peace above.—J.

Vers. 36—41.—*Beginning of the second missionary journey.* The dissension of Paul and Barnabas, painful in itself, may yield useful matter of reflection.

HUMAN INFIRMITY IN MATURE CHRISTIANS. 1. *The fact of it.* Paul judged severely of Mark on moral grounds. His desertion of him and Barnabas (ch. xiii. 13) on a former occasion was to his mind a strong proof of inconstancy. But Mark had fallen away from them, not from Christ. And Barnabas would lean to the side of leniency and clemency towards the young disciple. The contention became sharp. Both thought themselves to be contending for Christ; both were unconsciously contending for self. Both were in the right, each from his own point of view aiming at the good of the young man and the furtherance of the kingdom. 2. *The consolation of it.* (1) With reference to the person concerned. Chrysostom says that the strife was of great service to Mark; for the sternness of Paul brought a change in his mind, while the kindness of Barnabas suffered him not to feel abandoned. (2) With reference to us. We may be encouraged by the thought that these holy men were of like passions with ourselves, of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Divine love triumphs over and is made perfect in human weakness. Apart from that, man's very virtues become faults; the mildness of Barnabas degenerates into softness, the severity of Paul into harshness. Divine love converts faults into blessings. Mark is humiliated, and thereby raised in Christian manhood. The separation of the apostles divides the stream of saving grace into two streams, and so the more widely spreads it in the world.—J.



**Vers. 1—21.—The first council: spiritual liberty established.** The controversy between a corrupt Judaism and the gospel of Christ certain to be brought to a crisis. The conversion of Saul, taken in connection with his special mission to the Gentiles, forced the matter on the attention of the Church. The scene of the controversy was Antioch, where Paul would have many supporters. But Jerusalem was the proper place for a settlement—not because any authority was assigned to the spot, but because there could be gathered a more really representative assembly of the whole Church. Notice—

I. **THE FACTS THEMSELVES** are never questioned, but gladly acknowledged. The acceptance of the Gentiles, the blessing on the ministry of Paul and Barnabas, the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed on others than the Jewish believers.

II. **THE POINT OF CONTENTION** is the claim asserted by a small section of the Jewish Church, of Pharisaic spirit, to impose on the new Gentile converts the obligations of the Mosaic Law, particularly circumcision. This showed that they regarded Christ as only a Reformer of the Law, not as substituting the gospel for the Law.

III. **THE WHOLE CHURCH** is the body of referees. The apostles and elders are the speakers and leaders, but the multitude is present, and to them (ver. 22) the decision is referred.

IV. **THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT** in the facts rehearsed, the signs and wonders wrought, is plainly the voice of God to the apostles. Both Peter and James stand firmly on that foundation—God hath called them. Therefore we must obey his voice. The witness of the facts agrees with the witness of the word.

V. **THE RESTRICTIONS** which were deemed necessary were simply the dictates of brotherly love. Stumbling-blocks should not be thrown in the way of weak brethren. Let the Gentiles use their liberty, only let them respect the feelings of Jews and the moral demands of the Law.

VI. **THE CONTENTIOUS PARTY** must have been a mere handful of men. They are condemned by the letter sent to Antioch. The effect of the epistle was to silence them and produce a happy peace. Which representation entirely overthrows the statement of such critics as Baur, that there was a Pauline element in the Church opposed by the Petrine.

VII. **THE CAUSE OF STRIFE IS BURIED** in the depth of zealous labour for Christ and souls. Judas and Silas, the messengers from Jerusalem, soon forgot the trouble in much higher topics and co-operation with the Church at Antioch in their evangelistic efforts. Thus this first occasion of ecclesiastical settlement shows the Church pervaded with the spirit of brotherly love and faith. They had no conception of Church authority apart from the voice of God's Spirit. They came together in perfect equality. They revered age and spiritual distinction, and the mind of the brethren gathered together in conference, but their chief dependence was on the promise of the Holy Ghost and his guidance, so that they could say, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us."—R.

**Ver. 9.—The spirituality of the gospel.** "Purifying [cleansing] their hearts by faith." Purity comes from within. The influence of pure thought and pure feeling on practice. The purification of Judaism typical. The Holy Ghost did the work. When the temple was closed, the kingdom of grace opened. The Spirit must operate upon the spirit. All ritualism, as such, contradicts the essential principles of gospel liberty.

I. **THE HEART NEEDS CLEANSING.** 1. Of its *falsehood*. The heathen world a world of lies. The tendency of fallen nature to believe strong delusions. 2. Of its *corrupt desires*. The Fall was a lowering of the spirit of humanity to the level of the inferior races. Animalism is the characteristic of heathenism and of an unregenerate state. 3. Of its *self-justification and pride*. The evil holds to it. A broken and contrite heart is required.

II. **THE HEART IS CLEANSED.** Consider the nature of the purity bestowed. 1. The conscience, by a sense of forgiveness; "perilous stuff" cleansed away. 2. An object of love revealed to whom the heart is surrendered. "Thou knowest that I love thee." The germ of the new life in the soil of the affections. 3. Consecration. Circumcision was a covenant sign. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." A pure will is that which is pledged by a changed course of action and a new position.

**III. THE HEART IS CLEANSED BY FAITH.** The contrast between the old covenant and the new. The truth accepted becomes the power of God unto salvation. Spiritual cleansing differs from: 1. Mereritual purification. 2. Mere nominal separation from the world by an external life. 3. Mere slavish obedience to the letter of the Law. A purity which rests upon faith is a purity embracing thoughts and desires, lifting the heart with joy, securing it against the temptation to self-righteousness and superficial morality. *Believe*; give your mind to the message; welcome the personal Saviour; follow the leading Spirit. Rejoice in the *liberty* of God's children. Christ's yoke is easy, his burden light.—R.

Vers. 26.—*Spiritual heroism.* "Men that have hazarded their lives," etc.

**I. THE POWER OF CHRIST'S NAME.** 1. Those who were ready to die for him must have accepted him as the fulfilment of all their hopes. The previous position of Paul and Barnabas instructive as showing what the Name of Christ was to them. 2. No mere change of creed so expressed. A personal affection at the root of their heroism. The self-sacrifice not only proved sincerity, but exemplified the transforming and ennobling power of the gospel.

**II. THE INFLUENCE OF HEROIC EXAMPLES.** 1. In strengthening faith. 2. In stimulating feeling. The Christianity of the present time apt to languish for lack of such influence. Times of great danger to the Church times of great testimony. The effect of missionary zeal in promoting the growth of character. 3. The true leaders of the Church should be foremost in devotion. Apostolic zeal very different from ecclesiastical fanaticism. The world bows before spiritual might.—R.

Vers. 36—41.—*Contention amongst brethren.* Importance of the record as showing: 1. The sincerity and simplicity of the Christian writers. An impostor would never have inserted such a fact. 2. The overruling grace of God. The treasure in earthen vessels. Infirmities in the agents magnifies him who, notwithstanding, accomplishes his purposes. Notice—

**I. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN WORK.** Constant watchfulness and inspection. "See how they fare;" for encouragement and confirmation; for maintenance of order for advancement in teaching. "Visit the brethren." Not only in each Church, but in the outlying districts; maintain brotherly sympathy. The true conception of the Church is that of a society resting on a spiritual basis of mutual confidence and love.

**II. SUBORDINATION OF PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS** to the highest interests of Christ's kingdom. Barnabas thought more of his nephew than the work. He was most in the wrong. The Church, by their commendation of Paul in prayer, plainly expressed their sympathy with his side of the controversy. At the same time, as Mark proved himself faithful, events showed that Paul might have yielded for the sake of peace without injury to the cause of truth. His strong will tempted him.

**III. THE ERRORS OF GOOD MEN** are not suffered to hinder the work of God. More good done by the division of labour. Introduction of Silas. Mark probably best under the sole guidance of Barnabas. The divisions in the Christian Church viewed in the light of this primitive contention. Not wholly injurious. Partly due to the natural differences of intellect and temper. Overruled to develop the variety of Christian character. Will be at last, like discords resolved into harmony, the source of glory to God. Yet, as at first, so always, remembrance of the infirmity and fallibility of great and good men should keep us near the throne of grace.—R.

Vers. 1—35.—*A great dissension on the threshold of the Gentile Church, and the apostolic management of it.* One subject knits together very firmly the contents of this paragraph. And the subject is one of the greatest importance. Its interest is all of the practical kind; and well had it been for the unconverted world had the Church through all these centuries abided by the suggested lessons that we have here. The one subject is the beginning of ecclesiastical dissension within the Church catholic itself; not on matter purely doctrinal, not on matter purely disciplinary, but on matter that may be for the time supposed to lie on the border-land between these two. For some will insist on making it mostly a question of veritable doctrine; others would stickle for it as a question at least of "decency and order" in discipline. Let us notice—

**I. THE SIMPLE QUESTION ITSELF AT ISSUE.** Gentiles have many great signs and wonders wrought amongst them, of which they are by no means simple beholders. They themselves are "a great part of them." They are believed in multitudes of cases to have become true converts to the new faith. The apostolic verdict and pronouncement have gone forth that "God had opened the door of faith" to them. And facts seem to speak for themselves, saying that they have received the gifts as well as the gift of the Holy Ghost. Must these Gentiles submit to the Jewish initiatory rite of circumcision?

**II. THE ORIGIN OF THE GREAT DISSENSION THAT AROSE UPON THIS SIMPLE QUESTION.** Certain men, evidently of the Church in Judæa, came down to Antioch, and with volunteered assiduity (ver. 24) took upon them to teach the brethren at Antioch that circumcision was a rite necessary for them to submit to, if they would be saved. Of these men, before they are condemned as mere officious idlers or "busybodies," it shall be granted that they had a right to their own religious views, their own reading of the Law and prophets, and their own past history; that they also had a right to travel and to go and see the new Gentile converts, whose Church at Antioch must in itself have been such a sign; and that, arrived there, they were not bound to keep a perpetual silence. But from the very moment that these things are conceded to the members of any Christian society dates the solemn responsibility which rests upon them. One of the great facts of the "liberty" (ver. 10; Gal. v. 1) of Christ's Church is that individual character shall be called out and strictly tried by the vast increase of individual responsibility. But the liberty cannot be had and the responsibility left. And up to this point these things may be noted—(1) that from the very first "offences would come," even within the Church; but (2) that it was no less "woe" to them by whom the offence should come; for that on *them* lay the responsibility (of which they should be aware and be *ware*), and not upon any *laches* on the part of the Church as a whole in not legislating, for instance, to suppress the freedom of individual thought and word. For to do this under the rule of Jesus would be to originate worse "offence." The very worst affront to Jesus is to substitute letter for spirit, law for love. The origin of a dissension, then, that excited much disputation, consumed much precious time, is certain to have awakened some bitterness of word and of temper, as well as to have caused no slight anxiety and pain to those concerned, was the gratuitous work of men who had not correct knowledge, did not try to get it (ver. 24), and who went *out* of their way to "make a great stir."

**III. THE APOSTOLIC MANAGEMENT OF THIS DISSENSION.** The somewhat indefinite phraseology of the second verse, compared with the words of the Apostle Paul in Gal. ii. 2, leaves us in very little uncertainty that we are to understand that Paul and Barnabas received special intimation from the Spirit that the question should be moved to Jerusalem; that the Church at Antioch heartily fell in with the rightness of this course, and rejoiced to attend the steps of the apostles and other delegates to the last, as well as to commend them in prayer to God. 1. If, then, the intimation of the Spirit showed the way for the apostles, it may be gathered (1) what really important issues were at stake, not in the matter only, but in the *manner of treating* this dissension; and (2) it may be assumed that many a time and anxiously and fervently did the two implore Divine guidance. *The Spirit* is the Ruler in the Church. How imperfectly is this vital fact remembered in modern days! And the Spirit's guidance is sought and obtained when clouds and stormy weather were presaged. As to the practical uses to be gained by this reference of the question to Jerusalem and to the body of the apostles and elders, it goes by saying. 2. When Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of the Antioch Church with them, reach Jerusalem, they are, in the first instance, courteously received by the whole Church with "the apostles and elders." The meeting was a service, and a happy, holy service. All hear what God has done (ver. 4), and the joy is great. And, finally, the question is opened, apparently as temperately as plainly (ver. 5). 3. The proper council shortly come together. It consists of "the apostles and elders." But the matter appears to have been argued in the presence of the whole assembly still (vers. 7, 12, 13, 22). Four leading speeches and arguments are recorded, and the order and the wisdom alike of the selection of speakers must be apparent. Who better to begin than Peter? His argument is plain, practical, and cannot be gainsaid. But the way in which he turns the tables on his brethren of the Jewish sticklers for circumcision (ver. 11) is most significant. There follow Barnabas and Paul with their



missionary tidings. These carried volumes of conviction, and were well fitted to do so. Men listen still wonderfully in preached sermons to *facts* and reliable history. It is these which weigh, too, with the unsophisticated and the mass. And with what keenness of attention and almost sympathetic pride they listen to these recitals from the lips of men who had "hazarded their lives for the Name" of the Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 26)! And after these thrilling speeches James (probably "the brother of the Lord" and the writer of the Epistle general) renews argument, corroborating it by Old Testament Scripture quotation. Nor does he sit down without making definite proposals to meet the present case. 4. In harmony with those proposals, the apostles and elders and the whole Church agree. And they agree to write and to send what they write by the honoured hands of Paul and Barnabas, and two others specially delegated from their own home communion to Antioch. Vers. 23—29 contain the words of a letter which, for kindly respect, for conciliatory tone toward all, for fidelity of truth (ver. 24), for "honour to whom honour" is due (ver. 26), for religious calling to witness of the one Ruler of the Church, "the Holy Ghost" (ver. 28), and for the word of exhortation (ver. 29), could not be surpassed. 5. The four peacemakers speed on their way to Antioch. They call "the multitude" (ch. iv. 32; vi. 5) together, deliver their letter, and congratulate the Gentiles liberated from many a fear in its "consolation." This gentle touch at the end speaks much of what had been transpiring in the minds of those Gentile converts, and helps as practical comment upon ver. 10 of this chapter. The two visitors, Judas and Silas, also address the Antioch Church, the latter of whom finds such interest in place and people that he stays at Antioch, there a while assisting Paul and Barnabas in their ministry and in their pastorate of the flock.

IV. SOME GENERAL LESSONS FOR CHURCH LIFE SUGGESTED BY THIS HISTORY. We should observe: 1. The sanction here given to the patient and faithful use of strictly *moral* forces in the government of the Church of Christ. The case had aspects that might well, on the one hand, try the forbearance of the large-hearted, and, on the other hand, tempt to high-handed despatch. But a world of trouble is not grudged to keep well within the spirit of the Master, and to have compassion on the weak, and to consider others in their errors and their small-mindedness, "lest they also be tempted," with whom confessedly may lie now the strength and the right and the goodness. 2. The honour done to courtesy and respect and to the observance of "duty towards equals," or those who for the time must be called so. Christianity often seems to offer us a very clear, very beautiful outline of the perfections possible to human society merely as such. 3. The kindest attention here paid to human feelings. It seems to shine out again and again. Where a cold, despotic, hard-and-fast ecclesiasticism would have found its occasion for triumphing, the true order of Christ's Church finds a chosen occasion for reverencing *feeling*. For upon and in addition to all the honour shown in the transactions recorded in this chapter to respect and courtesy, there is apparent the sympathy of true and heartfelt love. Amid great dangers the least possible damage was done to the reputation of young Christianity, and the comment might still be, "See how these Christians love one another."—B.

Vers. 37—39.—*Symptoms more startling.* There is a sense in which human nature and Christian principle are opposed to each other. When in conflict they are indeed two rare antagonists. It is astonishing at how many angles the former can be touched by the latter, and how deeply and incisively *this* cuts into that. The great dissension in the matter of circumcision and the new Gentile converts filled larger space under the eye; but how often has it faded away from the mental gaze of even the most devout reader when the present dissension has come immediately after upon his view, and with unwelcome semi-fascination riveted attention! Faithful, we may well say, as the "Spirit of all truth" is his Book. The sins and failings of apostles are not concealed. Nor are they even glossed over, though it was the very moment when men of devout sympathies would have given anything to veil them from view and withdraw them from any permanent record. The record lies here, and it must be for use. A certain indefiniteness characterizes it where it would have particularly suited our curiosity to have exact detail and pronounced verdict. That very incompleteness is sure to shelter valuable hints. We shall do well, then, to notice as simply as possible the track of the narrative, and keep near it. We are taught—

**I. ONE ELEMENT OF THE RESPECT DUE TO SCRIPTURE.** This is to compare Scripture with Scripture. The slight hint of ch. xiii. 13 lies for a while like a chance seed dropped in chance soil. But now it has appeared above ground, and it takes shape and colour, and buds with meaning. Ch. xx. 39 furnishes us with another kind of instance of the value of reading Scripture in this way, where we glean a beautiful saying of "the Lord Jesus," *not recorded* elsewhere, though the apostle calls on those to whom he was speaking to "remember" it as a thing they had heard or read.

**II. SCRIPTURE'S EXAMPLE AS TO OCCASIONAL RETICENCE.** Here was a quarrel undoubtedly. There was, without doubt, Divine reason for writing certain facts of it on the page of inspiration. But how frugal the language is! How utterly absent the least symptom of satisfaction in the narrating of it! And there is not an attempt to dilate or expatiate upon it.

**III. SCRIPTURE'S EXAMPLE AS TO PASSING JUDGMENT AND MEASURING OUT PRAISE AND BLAME.** If Scripture is thus cautious, with all the resources, amounting often as in this case to certainty of knowledge, which it possesses, how much more careful should we be to avoid a course for which our nature seems often to manifest a strong predilection! It is our very disappointment here that blame is *not* apportioned between Paul and Barnabas, nor any final verdict pronounced. But, on second thoughts, is that disappointment of worthy sort?

**IV. HOW TWO UNDOUBTEDLY CHRISTIAN MEN MAY TAKE VERY DIFFERENT VIEWS OF DUTY IN SOME ONE PRACTICAL MATTER.** 1. It is even pleasant and suggestive to note that the difference was none of *doctrine*. The "unity of the faith," at all events, is not wounded in the house of its friends. 2. It is even possible, though perhaps scarcely probable, that this difference of opinion was abundantly legitimate, and that it proceeded from as much excellence of one kind in Barnabas as of another in Paul. Barnabas may have leaned to John in compassion and forgiveness and desire to give him another trial, instead of shutting him out from it for one offence. And strong, trenchant Paul may have been so stricken with the "memory" of the words of "the Lord Jesus" about the man who "put his hand to the plough, and looked back," and like words, that he could not feel it was a case for human kindness as against Divine fidelity, and could not entertain two opinions upon it. Paul also may have rightly estimated the incalculable disgrace and reproach it would bring upon the work of Christ if at some more unfortunately critical point than before Mark should fail. It must be admitted that both of these good men *may have been* justified in thinking that the matter was *not* a little matter and *not* a matter for yielding, but for allowing conscience "to have her perfect work."

**V. HOW TREMBLINGLY CAREFUL GOOD MEN SHOULD BE IN DIFFERING TO GOVERN TEMPER AND RESTRAIN ALL BITTERNESS.** However possibly motives *may* have been unimpeachable on this occasion, and justifiable room have existed for two opinions, yet it is impossible to escape the conviction that difference degenerated into dispute. The passage-at-arms was *not* altogether that of brethren, but it was "so sharp" that the sacred phraseology uses an equivalent not less forcible than the word "exasperation."

**VI. HOW MUCH BETTER IT IS TO SEPARATE, AND BOTH WORK, RATHER THAN FIGHT AND BOTH STOP WORK.** The separation of this place may be regarded as the typical instance of the New Testament, as the separation of Abram and Lot (Gen. xiii. 5—18) is that of the old, with consequences not altogether dissimilar. For from this point the star of Paul is more and yet more in the ascendant, as it was with Abram, but of Barnabas henceforth the sacred record fails to tell.

**VII. HOW GRATEFULLY WE SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THE GOODNESS AND THE PITY THAT STILL USE SINFUL, IMPERFECT MEN, AND OUT OF ALL THE TANGLE OF HUMAN STRIFE BRING TO PASS DIVINE PURPOSES AND THE SALVATION OF MEN.** For when all else is said, and our whole brief narrative in these few verses is surveyed, we most gratefully gather this residuum of good and of comfort. 1. The purpose that visited Paul's heart and his sharing of it with Barnabas—a purpose that rose from a heart's deep and high love, and that was nothing daunted by the prospect of danger and suffering. 2. The outspoken and honest objection taken by Paul to the company of Mark. That this objection, with its blunt honesty, finds room, given to it on the page may be taken as some indication that the right lay with Paul. Nothing is breathed to detract from the propriety of his firm veto of Mark as a companion. 3. The prayers of the brethren

who send Paul forth, and their "recommending him to the grace of God." These three things are welcome reliefs in the midst of a scene not attractive in its main aspects. Would that as much redeeming impression could be found in other cases of "sharp contention" among Christian brethren and fellow-labourers in the same vineyard!—B.

**Ver. 1.—Circumcision and salvation.** Revised Version, "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." It was inevitable that the claims of Judaism and of Christianity should presently come into conflict. The conflict, when it came, would be sure to rage round some one particular point of difference; not necessarily the most important point, but the one which would give most prominence to the essential differences. Circumcision was only a formal rite, and its importance might easily be exaggerated; but it sealed the exclusiveness of the Jewish system, and it illustrated its ceremonial character, so it formed a good ground on which to fight. The Jews had this vantage-ground. Circumcision was unquestionably a Divine institution; and the Christian could bring no proof whatever that it had been formally removed. The Christian teachers could only urge that the "life in Christ" no longer needed formal bonds, and that God's grace in Christ Jesus was given to those who were not of the circumcision. St. Paul took very firm ground on the question. While prepared to go to the very limits of charitable concession in dealing with those who felt the helpfulness of rites and ceremonies, he was prepared to resist to the death any tampering with the gospel condition of salvation, or any attempt to declare that saving grace could be found in any formal ordinance or ceremony. "When the very foundations of Christianity were in danger of being undermined, it was not possible for St. Paul to 'give place by subjection.'"

**I. MAN'S HIGHEST NEED CONCEIVED AS SALVATION.** Not reformation; not religion; not material prosperities; not intellectual attainments; not culture; but distinctly *salvation*, which is a moral good, bears direct relation to personal sins and to a sinful state, and is conceivable only by some Divine intervention, and on revealed Divine terms. Man's final cry is, "What must I do to be saved?" "How can man be just with God?" Salvation, conceived as man's reconciliation with God, was the idea of Judaism, and it was *represented* by man's being brought into covenant relations, and kept in them by sacrifice and ceremonial. Judaism had a *moral* life within its ritual, and this finds expression in the Psalms and in the prophets. Salvation, as apprehended by Christianity, is man's reconciliation to God, upon his penitence for sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the all-sufficient Sacrifice for sin and Saviour entrusted with authority to forgive. The two systems are related, as a shadow is related to the figure that throws it; but the two cannot be *combined*; the shadow must pass altogether when the substance has come. The salvation man wants is a soul-salvation, and *that* no rite, no ceremonial, can touch.

**II. THE OLDER IDEA OF THE MEANS OF SALVATION.** Salvation was a Divine favour granted to one particular race. The Abrahamic relations, standing, and rights were secured to all who adopted the appointed sign and seal of circumcision. In later years outsiders were admitted to share the "salvation," or "standing with God," of the Abrahamic race, by submitting to the rite of circumcision. As spirituality faded from the Jewish life, increasing importance became attached to the mere rite, and zealots contended for it as if in it alone lay the hope of salvation. There is an important place for ritual, but it is ever perilous to spiritual truth if it is put out of its place. It is a useful handmaid; it is a tyrannous mistress.

**III. THE NEWER IDEA OF THE MEANS OF SALVATION AS REVEALED TO THE APOSTLES.** Not works of righteousness, but "faith," which presupposes penitence. How is a sinner saved? Apart from all systems or ceremonies, he must accept the salvation freely offered to him by God in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. The act of acceptance is called "faith." We cannot wonder that this new and most gracious condition of salvation should have pushed the older idea altogether out of the apostles' minds. It seemed new; they would not even try to think how it fitted the old. Conscious of the new life and joy it brought, they would find themselves gradually being weaned from Jewish ceremonial, and the more advanced thinkers, such as St. Paul, would be even in some danger of exaggerating the contrasts between the old and the new.



**IV. THE EFFORT TO RESTORE AGAIN THE OLDER IDEA.** Truths and practices which have long absorbed the interest of men do not die without a struggle. Some champions linger on, and show fight at every opportunity. A wealth of interests gather round every religious system, and generations must pass before these can be wholly changed. So we cannot wonder that the sterner Judaism showed fight against the apostles, or that paganism again and again made desperate efforts to resist advancing Christianity. The Jewish teachers seem on this occasion to have acted in an underhanded and unworthy way. "The course they adopted, in the first instance, was not that of open antagonism to St. Paul, but rather of clandestine intrigue. They came as 'spies' into an enemy's camp, creeping in unawares, and gradually insinuating or openly inculcating their opinion that the observance of the Jewish Law was *necessary to salvation*." Two things need to be considered. 1. Why their teaching had to be so vigorously resisted. (1) Because it tended to confuse the minds of the disciples; (2) because it was fundamentally opposed to the Christian teaching. 2. On what grounds the resistance could be made. These were (1) the exclusiveness of the Christian condition of salvation—by faith; (2) the supreme claims of the teaching of Christ, who laid no such burden on his disciples; (3) the fact that the Holy Ghost sealed believers from among the uncircumcised. This is enough, then and now, "Whosoever believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life."—R. T.

**Vers. 2, 4.—The Jerusalem Church.** Christianity started out from Jerusalem. The disciples fulfilled their Lord's command, and "began at Jerusalem." The gospel was first preached at Jerusalem. The Holy Ghost endowed the Christian teachers, and sealed the Christian believers, first at Jerusalem. The Church first took form at Jerusalem. Its officers were first appointed at Jerusalem. And the records intimate that, when the other disciples were scattered abroad, the older and prominent apostles remained behind in the holy city, and exercised a kind of supervision over the work of the various Christian teachers. The constitution of the Jerusalem Church cannot be certainly known; but it is clear that St. Peter had no exclusive authority, and that if disputes and controversies were submitted to an apostolic council, their decision took the form of recommendation and not of command. As the subject will be treated from several points of view, according to the bias of the preacher, we give only the general outline of the topics that may be usefully considered.

**I. JERUSALEM, THE CHRISTIAN STARTING-POINT.** The first teachers were Jews; and Christianity is not only the proper outcome and perfection of Judaism, but it bears the Jewish stamp. It links on to the fundamental ideas of God, sin, redemption, which were revealed to the Jews. If it were wholly *new*, it could not be *true*.

**II. JERUSALEM, THE APOSTOLIC CENTRE.** A kind of mother Church. Observe how its council of apostles and elders was sought when difficulties of doctrine or practice arose; and how the Gentile Churches sent their charitable gifts to the poor saints at the mother Church.

**III. JERUSALEM, THE MODEL CHURCH.** How far any Church could present a model may be disputed. Any model would be efficient by reason of its illustrating working principles, not by virtue of its mere form.

**IV. JERUSALEM, THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY.** How far apostles claimed authority on the ground of their knowledge of Christ, inspiration, miraculous gifts, and power to give or bring the Holy Ghost, needs to be carefully considered.—R. T.

**Vers. 9-11.—Salvation by grace for all.** This passage is part of the speech delivered by St. Peter at the conference. His words ought to be weighty words, seeing that God had been pleased to reveal directly to him the relations in which the Gentiles should stand to his gospel. St. Peter would have been an intensely Jewish man but for his experiences at Joppa and Casarea. He had evidently learned well the lesson of the broadness of the Christian platform; and yet even he subsequently faltered, and brought himself under the rebuke of St. Paul. After reminding his hearers of the part which he himself had taken in admitting the Gentiles into the Christian Church, St. Peter urges this point: "The communication of the Holy Ghost was the true test of God's acceptance; and God had shown that he was no respecter of persons by shedding abroad the same miraculous gifts on Jew and Gentile, and purifying by faith the

hearts of both alike." He further reminds them what a heavy yoke the Jewish Law had proved for many generations; how thankful they were to be relieved from the legal bondage by the salvation offered through faith; and how unreasonable it would be to attempt to impose on others a burden which neither they nor their fathers had ever been able to bear. Dean Plumptre gives thus the conclusion of St. Peter's speech: "The Pharisee might regard the Law as binding; but even he, if he believed in Christ, was compelled to confess that his hope of salvation was found in the work of Christ as the Saviour; and if so, then, as regards that hope, Jew and Gentile were on the same level, and the judgment that men could not be saved without the Law was but the inconsistency of an intolerant dogmatism, insisting on imposing that which was acknowledged to be profitless." There is in St. Peter's speech a firm declaration of the great evangelical principles.

I. SALVATION ON GOD'S SIDE IS HIS ACT OF GRACE. The idea of purchase or desert is wholly excluded from it. Salvation by perfect obedience to formal rules, and faithful keeping of covenant terms, had been thoroughly tried in Judaism, and it had certainly and hopelessly failed, because sinning man lacked the power. Man could no more save himself by the attempted obediences of Judaism than by the human schemes devised in heathenism. It was evident that salvation for man must be an intervention of Divine love, a manifestation of Divine grace. And this is the very essence of the gospel message concerning God: "What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Salvation is a Divine gift, offered freshly and freely, apart from all previous revelations and conditions, on terms which God himself is pleased to arrange. And, without bringing forward any older ideas or customs, our simple duty is to listen to God as he tells us the conditions upon which he is pleased to offer forgiveness and life. We may be quite satisfied if we can find the terms laid down in the new covenant of grace, and they are these: "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life."

II. SALVATION, ON MAN'S SIDE, IS HIS ACT OF FAITH. No gift can be of value unless there is a proper preparedness to receive it. We do not simply scatter our common earthly gifts, we choose to whom we shall give them, and we expect them to be in such a state of mind and feeling towards us as shall ensure that they will accept and make good use of our gifts. Such conditions apply to the gift of salvation. Of free grace, though it is, it requires something in man which can alone secure that the gift will be valued. The spiritual preparedness of man for the spiritual gift is called *faith*. It is illustrated in the disposition of mind which Christ required in those whom he miraculously healed. And it includes (1) surrender of self-trust; (2) confidence in God's provision and promise; and (3) a full desire for and expectancy of Divine help. Faith, as a disposition or mood of mind, is to be distinguished from faith as an act. The state of faith sets us ready to receive the gift; the act of faith appropriates the gift. So presenting man's faith, it will be clearly seen that no kind of "merit," as a saving work, can attach to it.

III. BOTH ARE LARGE ENOUGH CONDITIONS TO COVER AND EMBRACE ALL HUMANITY. Jew and Gentile too. This is St. Peter's point in vers. 9, 11. The grace of the universal Father can, without doubt, reach and bless and save all. And *faith* is so common, so universal a human faculty that it can be made a condition for all. Every one can thankfully open hand and heart to receive a gift. Everybody can trust.—R. T.

Ver. 26.—*The highest Christian commendation.* Nothing could be said more fitted to ensure the confidence of the Churches in the messengers sent from the conference than this description: "Men that have hazarded their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus." It may be observed that men have established this test of sincerity, nobility, or belief in any truth: "Could the man stake his life on it?" "Was he willing to die for it?" The heroic traveller is the man who stakes his life on his purpose, as did Livingstone. The heroic soldiers are they who volunteer for the forlorn hope, and die to serve their country. The heroic martyrs are the men who can die for their faith and opinion. No man's faith has come under the full testing unless, in some form, it is proved whether he will die for it. The sublimest of all illustrations is found in our Lord's purpose of perfect obedience to his Father's will. That purpose came under

many and various testings, but we could not feel that it was perfect, and indeed the infinite example, if he had not kept it through the trial of that agonizing death. He not only "hazarded," he actually yielded his life in maintaining that obedience. By the same test Barnabas and Paul had been proved, and in their first missionary journey their lives had again and again been in peril; once indeed Paul had been left for dead after the riotous stoning of the populace (ch. xiii. 50; xiv. 19). From the Christian standpoint the noblest and best men are—

**I. THOSE WHO CAN SACRIFICE SELF.** Self-seeking is the marked characteristic of the unrenowned man, toned, however, by amiability, kindness of disposition, generosity, motherhood, etc., as elements of the natural character. Self-denial is the highest conception of purely human virtue, and is the noblest adornment of human character. In a thousand forms "self-denial" is demanded in our common life and relations; and none of the responsible positions in life can be occupied without this virtue being demanded. Self-sacrifice is seldom required; but the man who can meet this demand gains the first place in the world's esteem. Illustrate by the doctor who dies for his patient; the mother who dies for her child; the rescuer who dies in rescuing; the missionary who yields his life in his mission. The extreme demand may not always be made; it often has to be faced. And we may test our own hold of truth, duty, or hope, by putting to ourselves this question, "Could I die for it?" Show what kind of moral power the heroic leaders in self-sacrifice gain over their fellows. 1. They declare that duty is before pleasure. 2. They attest the grandeur of a cherished idea. 3. They glorify the conception of right. 4. They uphold faith in God. 5. They affirm the insignificance of this life in view of the life that is to come. 6. They keep up the standard of life for us all; and are, as angel-ministrants, ever beckoning us on to higher and nobler things.

**II. THOSE WHO CAN SACRIFICE SELF FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST'S NAME.** Taken in two senses: 1. For the sake of upholding the honour of Christ's Name, seeing that he is ever honoured in the conduct of his servants. Men praise him through what they see of him in us. He "laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 2. For the sake of making witness for Christ. No witness can have the power of a martyrdom. Illustrate Stephen's witness in his death. (1) Self-sacrifice sets Christ up in the view of men, for all gather round the martyr, and wonder over his calmness and victory. (2) Self-sacrifice proves the truth of doctrine (see Paley's argument from the persecutions and sufferings of the early teachers). (3) Self-sacrifice for Christ impresses upon us the extraordinary fascination which the Lord Jesus can exert on men's souls. How we must love those for whom we are willing to die! None can take our love so that for the sake of it we will yield our life, as does the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclude by showing that passing ages do not change the Divine demands, only change the forms in which they find expression. The heroic life of self-denial in many things, and even of self-sacrifice sometimes, as our witness to Christ, is still demanded, in these indulgent times, of all who name the Name of the Lord Jesus.—R. T.

**Vers. 28, 29.—Reasonable and unreasonable burdens.** "To lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." The precise nature of the things which the council thought essential to Christian standing and life are discussed in the Expository portion of this Commentary, and materials for the introduction of our subject will be found in it. "The letter does not say why these things were necessary, and the term was probably chosen as covering alike the views of those who held, like the Pharisee Christians, that they were binding on the Church for ever, and those who, like St. Paul, held that they were necessary only for a time, and as a measure of wise expediency." The letter is a most wise and careful one; it avoids the details of the dispute, or any report of the discussion in the council. It accuses no one, but by implication supports the position which St. Paul had taken. It effectually checked for a time the agitation created by the Judaizing party. Two dangers attended the young Christian Church. 1. A false conception of liberty in Christ, which really meant "licence," and ruinous loosening of self-restraint and reasonable rule. 2. A mischievous bondage to mere forms, out of which the life and meaning had long faded, and passed. The council wisely met the twofold danger by declaring that the old forms



were no longer binding, but that the Christian liberty ought to be set under safe, prudent, and mutually accepted rules and restraints. The laying on Gentile Christians of the old Judaic burdens was unreasonable. But the laying on them of burdens coming from the relations of Christian principles to the sins and evils of society, all must recognize to be reasonable. They were free, but they must not use their liberty unwisely, or so as to injure the conscience and sensitive feeling of even the weakest brother among them. We may gather from this advice given to the Antiochene Church some clear distinctions between the reasonable and unreasonable in burdens laid on us as Christians.

**I. THE BURDEN OF CUSTOM IS UNREASONABLE.** The plea, "Everybody does it, therefore you must," is one which the Christian is quite justified in rejecting. Fashion in religious conduct, or in religious worship, or in religious doctrine, if it is imposed as a burden, the Christian may call unreasonable. He is in no sense obliged to follow such lead unless he can clearly discern that the fashion or custom expresses the claim of the *right*. Oftentimes customs grow up which become a terrible slavery, and it becomes necessary for some Christians to break the bonds as resolutely as St. Paul did the bonds of these Judaizing teachers. Illustrate from the three spheres : (1) religious doctrine ; (2) religious worship ; (3) religious society.

**II. THE BURDEN OF ABROGATED LAW IS UNREASONABLE.** Recognizing the progression of Divine revelation, we see that a step upwards involves freedom from the step below. Judaism was one step in Divine revelation, and it prepared for the spiritual revelation in Christ, which was a step higher. It was unreasonable to press the demands of formal Judaism, and much more unreasonable to press the claims of rabbinical Judaism, on those who had been lifted up to the spiritual and Christian platform. This point is well argued by Phillips Brooks, in a most suggestive sermon on the 'Symbol and the Reality.' He says, "There is no better test of men's progress than this advancing power to do without the things which used to be essential to their lives. As we climb a high mountain, we must keep our footing strong upon one ledge until we have fastened ourselves strongly on the next ; then we may let the lower foothold go. The lives of men who have been always growing are strewed along their whole course with the things which they have learned to do without." What an overburdened life ours would be if we were compelled to carry all the old things we once valued and used with us in our advance to the new ! Yet there is a sense in which, even in our Christian times, men press on us the burden of that which is past, abrogated, and done with. It may be effectively illustrated in relation to Christian doctrine. It is said that Judaic forms of sacrifice explain the Christian redemption ; and we may urge that this is an unreasonable burden, and all that we need to accept is, that Judaic sacrifice was the figure and symbol, by the help of which men were prepared to apprehend and receive the moral and spiritual redemption wrought in and by the Lord Jesus. We, as well as the early disciples, may properly refuse the burden of Mosaic symbols and forms, which have had their day, done their work, and ceased to be.

**III. THE BURDEN OF AGREED RULES IS REASONABLE.** All associations of persons together involve mutual acceptance of conditions of fellowship ; and those conditions must put limitations on personal liberty. Illustrate by the necessary rules of a nation, a club, a family, a congregation. These are reasonable, and are no infringements of liberty, but a proper expression of it. No one feels such to be a burden. Further than this, society, as constituted in each country and age, has an unwritten code of manners and morals, and this need not be unreasonable, nor is it felt to be a burden so long as it manifestly concerns the preservation of social virtue and goodness. As with the early Church, the conditions of society may make specific demands on Christians, such as are indicated in ver. 29 ; but these may reasonably be accepted as the restraints of the few for the good of the whole.

**IV. THE BURDEN OF CHARITY IS REASONABLE.** Here we come upon ground which St. Paul's teaching to the Corinthians has made very familiar. Christian love even rejoices to put itself into bonds if thus it can gain influence on others. In conclusion, urge that *life* properly refuses bonds, and demands free expression ; but the life in Christ willingly puts itself under rules for his sake and for others' sake.—R. T.

**VERS. 37—39.—Contentions and separations.** It is sometimes a weakness of dealing

with Scripture characters that "inspiration" is not distinguished from "perfection." The place of human infirmity in divinely endowed men is not sufficiently recognized. And yet, for the correction of this very tendency, the frailty of good men is always indicated in the Scripture histories. Of only one man—the Man Christ Jesus—can it be said, "In him was no sin." So when it is manifest that good men have fallen into error and sin, unnatural ways of explaining the fact are often resorted to, and men are afraid to recognize that these great men of Scripture were really "men of like passions with us;" and so, from our own experiences, we can best apprehend their failings. A point needing much careful thought is the relation of the Divine regeneration to the natural disposition and character. It is a renewal of the man if it renews *his will*; but it has to be followed up by a continuous Divine work which renews the mind, character, temper, habits, and relations; and we must not be surprised if, at any particular point of that work, there remain frailties and infirmities. Evidently no idea of absolute perfection of character and disposition can be entertained concerning either Barnabas—"a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost"—or of Paul, who had been called to the apostleship. A close survey of the relations between these two missionaries reveals a gradual drifting apart, a kind of widening distance between them, which probably neither of them consciously recognized or in any way encouraged. When they started out, Barnabas, as the elder man and the elder Christian, took the leading place; but circumstances brought Paul to the front. There was force of character, power on others, natural leadership, which men soon recognized, in spite of his somewhat insignificant appearance; and as he gradually subsided into the second place, Barnabas could very naturally cherish the idea that Paul had better go alone, or with companions of his own choosing. Actual grounds of separation usually follow on a period of secretly divided feeling, and the difficulty that arose over John Mark need not have been so serious if there had been no previous unconscious drifting asunder. Difficulties and dissensions occur only too often in family and Church life, but they seldom are mere sudden storms which cannot be accounted for; they follow on a condition of atmosphere which has necessitated them sooner or later. Olshausen says, on this contention between Barnabas and Paul, "Paul appears, although indeed this cannot be imagined, to have permanently violated the principle of love, for on account of a single fault he entirely threw off Mark; and of Barnabas it might be feared that love for his relative, more than a conviction of his fitness, was the motive for taking him as a companion on his missionary journey. But on closer consideration these surmises are seen to be perfectly groundless." These considerations prepare the way for a closer examination of the "contention" and the consequent separation of these two good friends and fellow-labourers.

**I. THE SUBJECT OF THE CONTENTION.** Give some account of Mark; his probable youthfulness; his mother's dependence on him; his particular office as minister or attendant on the two missionaries. The difficulties and dangers of travelling in those times required that several should go together; and as men of good family and associations, both Barnabas and Paul would be accustomed to, and dependent on, the daily offices of servants or attendants. Ministry to such a person as St. Paul we would count honourable indeed.

**II. THE ARGUMENTS OF THE CONTENTION.** These may easily be imagined. Each man took his own point of view and pressed it too hard. Each had good show of reason, but each manifested self-will in presenting it. The arguments were of little avail towards producing satisfactory results, because the divergence was rather one of sentiment and feeling than of deliberate judgment. Arguments seldom help the settlement of disputes that really arise from diversity of feeling. Christian principle and Christian charity and brotherliness can do more in such cases than the most convincing arguments.

**III. THE RESULTS OF THE CONTENTION.** These may be shown so far as they affected (1) St. Paul, (2) Barnabas, (3) Mark, (4) Silas. It may be shown that St. Paul's severity with Mark did not influence his personal affection for him; and that if, as a matter of judgment, he declined his service, he did not take up a permanent prejudice against him. In conclusion, lessons may be learnt from this incident concerning (1) the insidious growth of feelings that tend to separate "very friends;" (2) the hopelessness of settling the disputes which arise between men by mere argument; (3) the hope

that lies in the exercise of mutual forbearance, kindly yielding of our own, anxiety to find common ground, and the true Christian brotherliness, to preserve us from separating contentions, and to heal them when they arise.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1.—*And he came also for then came he, A.V. and T.R.; to Lystra for Lystra, A.V.; Timothy for Timotheus, A.V.; of a Jewess for of a certain woman which was a Jewess, A.V. and T.R.; which for and, A.V.* For Derbe and Lystra, see ch. xiv. and notes. This time St. Paul visited Derbe first, whereas before he came from Lystra to Derbe (ch. xiv. 6, 8, 21). Was there; viz. at Lystra (see 2 Tim. iii. 11). A certain disciple; i.e. a Christian (ch. xi. 26). From St. Paul's speaking of Timothy as "my own son in the faith" (1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2), and from his special mention of Timothy's mother Eunice (2 Tim. i. 5), it is probable that both mother and son were converted by St. Paul at his first visit to Lystra, some years before (ch. xiv. 7). Timothy. It is a Greek name, meaning "one who honours God" (formed, like *Timoleon*, *Timolaus*, *Timocrates*, etc.). It was a not uncommon name, and occurs repeatedly in the Books of the Maccabees (1 Macc. v. 6; 2 Macc. viii. 30, etc.). Another form is *Timesitheos*. Timothy is uniformly spoken of by St. Paul in terms of eulogy and warm affection (see, besides the passages above quoted, Rom. xvi. 21; 1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10; Phil. ii. 19—22; and the general tone of the Epistles to Timothy). A Jewess; viz. *Eunice* (2 Tim. i. 5), also a Greek name (equivalent to *Victoria*), though borne by a Jewess. A Greek; i.e. a Gentile (see Mark vii. 26; ch. xiv. 1; xvii. 4; xix. 10; Rom. i. 16; ii. 9; 1 Cor. x. 32, etc.; Col. iii. 11). Had his father been a proselyte, it would probably have been said that he was (Bengel).

Ver. 2.—*The same for which, A.V.* This is an improvement, as making it plain that it was Timothy, not his father, who was well reported of. For the phrase, *ὃς μαρτυροῖτο*, see ch. vi. 3; x. 22; Luke iv. 22. At Lystra and Iconium; coupled together, as in 2 Tim. iii. 11. It appears, too, from ch. xiv. 19, that there was close communication between Iconium and Lystra. The brethren at Iconium would, therefore, naturally know all about young Timothy (comp. 1 Tim. iii. 7).

Ver. 3.—*He took for took, A.V.; that for which, A.V.; parts for quarters, A.V.; all knew for knew all, A.V.* Circumcised him. The Jewish origin of Timothy on his mother's side was a sufficient reason for circumcising him, according to the maxim, *Partus sequitur*

*ventrem*. And it could be done without prejudice to the rights of Gentile converts as established in the decrees of which St. Paul was bearer. Because of the Jews; not the Christian Jews, who ought to know better than trust in circumcision, but the unbelieving Jews, who would be scandalized if St. Paul had an uncircumcised man for his fellow-labourer (see 1 Cor. x. 20).

Ver. 4.—*Went on their way for went, A.V.; which had been for that were, A.V.; that for which, A.V.*

Ver. 5.—*So for and so, A.V.; the Churches were strengthened for were the Churches established, A.V.* In number; i.e. in the number of their members (comp. ch. ii. 47; v. 14; vi. 7; xi. 21). For the phrase, *Ἐστερεώθη τῇ πίστει*, "They were made firm in the faith," comp. Col. ii. 5, *τὸ στερέωμα τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν*, "The steadfastness of your faith." The word is used in its physical sense in ch. iii. 7, *Ἐστερεώθησαν αὐτοῦ αἱ βάσεις, κ.τ.λ.*, "His feet and ankle-bones received strength," became fast and firm instead of being loose and vacillating.

Ver. 6.—*And they went for now when they had gone, A.V. and T.R.; through the region of Phrygia and Galatia for throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, A.V. and T.R.; having been for and were, A.V.; speak for preach, A.V.* The region of Phrygia and Galatia. But Phrygia is always a noun substantive, and cannot be here taken as an adjective belonging to *χώρα*; and we have in ch. xviii. 23 exactly the same collation as that of the A.V. here, only in an inverted order: *τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν καὶ Φρυγίαν*. Even if the *τὴν* is properly omitted, as in the R.T., before *Γαλατικὴν*, the passage must equally be construed as in the A.V. The Galatians were Celts, the descendants of those Gauls who invaded Asia in the third century B.C. This passage seems to show conclusively that Derbe and Lystra and Iconium were not comprehended by St. Paul under Galatia, and were not the Churches to whom the Epistle to the Galatians was addressed; and forcibly suggest that the Galatian Churches were founded by St. Paul in the course of the visit here so briefly mentioned by St. Luke. Asia is here used in its restricted sense of that district on the western coast of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital. It is in this sense that it is used also in ch. ii. 9; vi. 9; xix. 10, etc.; Rev. i. 11. St. Paul apparently wished to go to Ephesus. But the



time was not yet come. It was the purpose of the Holy Ghost that the Galatian Churches should be founded first, and then the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia. The apostles were sent, did not go anywhere of their own accord (comp. Matt. x. 5, 6).

Ver. 7.—*And when for after, A.V. and T.R.; come over against (κατὰ) for come to, A.V.; and the Spirit of Jesus for but the Spirit, A.V. and T.R.* But the phrase, "the Spirit of Jesus," occurs nowhere in the New Testament, and is on that account very improbable here, though there is considerable manuscript authority for it. It is accepted by Meyer and Alford and Wordsworth, following Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, etc.

Ver. 8.—*Passing . . . they came for they passing . . . came, A.V.* They would have gone north to Bithynia, where, we know from 1 Pet. i. 1, there were many Jews. But the Spirit ordered them westwards, to the seacoast of Troas, that they might be ready to sail for Macedonia. In like manner Abraham went out not knowing whither he went (Heb. xi. 8). Truly the footsteps of God's providence are not known!

Ver. 9.—*There was a man . . . standing, beseeching him, and saying for there stood a man . . . and prayed him, saying, A.V.* Thus was ushered in the most momentous event in the history of Europe, the going forth of the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem to enlighten the nations of the West, and bring them into the fold of Jesus Christ. Paul saw and heard this in a vision in the night. It is not called a dream (Bengel), but was like the vision seen by Ananias (ch. ix. 10), and those seen by Paul (ch. ix. 12; x. 5; xviii. 9). A vision (ὄραμα) is distinguished from a dream (ἐνύπνιον, ch. ii. 17). It is applied to things of a marvellous character seen objectively, as to the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 9) and to the burning bush (ch. vii. 31).

Ver. 10.—*When for after, A.V.; straight-way for immediately, A.V.; sought for endeavoured, A.V.; go forth for go, A.V.; concluding for assuredly gathering, A.V.; God for the Lord, A.V. and T.R.* Concluding; συμβαδάσcentes, only here in the sense of "concluding" or "gathering." In ch. ix. 22 it is "proving." In Eph. iv. 16 and Col. ii. 2 it means to "join together." In classical Greek to "bring together" in the sense of "reconciling," sometimes of "agreeing" to a proposition. In the LXX., to "instruct," "teach" (1 Cor. ii. 16). In this verse we first remark the very important introduction of the pronoun *we* into the narrative, marking the presence of the historian himself, and showing that he first joined St. Paul at Troas. He went with him to Philippi (ver. 12), and there he appears to have stopped till St. Paul returned there in

his third missionary journey on his way from Achaia to Jerusalem (ch. xx. 5, 6), where we find him still with the apostle (ch. xx. 17, 18). We again find him with St. Paul at Cæsarea, while he was a prisoner there (ch. xxvii. 1), and he accompanied him on the voyage to Rome, which is the last place where we hear of him (ch. xxvii. 2, 3, etc.; xxviii. 2, 11, 14—16; Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24). It is quite characteristic of Holy Scripture that things are told, or appear on the face of the narrative, without any explanation. Who Luke was, what brought him to Troas, how he became a companion of St. Paul, whether as his medical adviser or otherwise, we know not. His Christian modesty forbade his speaking about himself.

Ver. 11.—*Setting sail therefore for therefore loosing, A.V.; made for came with, A.V.* (ἐκβυθρόμεω, elsewhere only in ch. xxi. 1): *Samothrace for Samothracia, A.V.; day following for next day, A.V.* In the New Testament this latter phrase only occurs in the Acts.

Ver. 12.—*A city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony for the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony, A.V.; this for that, A.V.; tarrying for abiding, A.V.* A city of Macedonia, etc. This is a difficult sentence. The natural way of construing the words undoubtedly is, as in the A.V., "which is the chief city of the [or, 'that'] district of Macedonia, and a colony." The only difficulty in the way of so taking it is that when Æmilius Paulus, as related by Livy (xlv. 29), divided the conquered kingdom of Macedonia into four districts (*regiones* or *partes*), Amphipolis was made the capital of the district in which Philippi was situated. But the epithet *πρώτη* does not necessarily mean the capital; it is found on coins applied to cities which were not capitals. Besides, in the interval of above two hundred years between Æmilius Paulus and St. Paul (from B.C. 167 to A.D. 50), it is very probable that the city of Philippi, with its gold-mines and its privileges as a colony, may have really become the capital. And so Lewin, following Wetstein, understands it (vol. ii. p. 209). We know that in the reign of Theodosius the Younger, when Macedonia was divided into two provinces, Philippi became the ecclesiastical head of Macedonia Prima. It had been made a colony by Augustus Cæsar, with the name "Col. Jul. Aug. Philip.," i.e. Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis ('Dict. of Greek and Roman Geog.'). It must, therefore, anyhow have been a place of first-rate importance at this time. Those, however, who do not accept this explanation, couple *κοινωνία* with *πόλις*, "which is the first colony-city," etc. Others take *πρώτη* in a local sense, "the first city

you come to in Macedonia" (Conybeare and Howson, Alford, Bengel, etc.). The R.V. seems to take *ἦτις ἐστὶ . . . Μακεδονίας πόλις* together, and *πρώτη τῆς μερίδος* as a further description of it—a most awkward construction. Alford renders it, "which is the first Macedonian city of the district." But the natural way of construing a passage is almost always the best, and nothing prevents us from believing that St. Luke, who knew Philippi intimately, was strictly accurate in calling it "the chief city of the district of Macedonia," i.e. the district in which it was situated. That *μέρις* is the technical name of the division of a province appears from the title *μεριδάρχης*, applied by Josephus to a certain Apollonius, governor, under Antiochus Epiphanes, of the district in which Samaria was included ('Ant. Jud.,' xii. v. 5). The ancient name of Philippi was *Datos* first, then *Krenides*—the springs, or wells; and the word used by Livy of the districts of Macedonia, *pars prima, secunda*, etc., is an exact translation of *μέρις*. It received the name of Philippi, from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, who extracted a great revenue from its gold-mines. Its great historical celebrity arises from the battle in the plain of Philippi, in which the republican party, under Brutus and Cassius, received its death-blow from Octavius and Antony. (For a full description of Philippi, and of the privileges of a colony, see Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. 311, etc., and Lewin, vol. i. ch. xi.) This Alford, following certain manuscripts, reads *αὐτῇ*, "in the city itself," as distinguished from the place outside the city, where the *προσευχή* was. But, perhaps, St. Luke uses the word "this" from Philippi being the place of his own residence, and where he may have drawn up the narrative on the spot.

Ver. 13.—*Salbath day for sabbath, A.V.; we went forth without the gate for we went out of the city, A.V. and T.R. (πύλης for πολέως); we supposed there was a place of prayer for prayer was wont to be made, A.V.; were come together for resorted thither, A.V.* By a river side. By the river side is the natural way of expressing it in English. The river is not the Strymon, which is a day's journey distant from Philippi, but probably a small stream called the Gangas or Gangites, which is crossed by the Via Egnatia, about a mile out of Philippi. The neighbourhood of water, either near a stream or on the seashore, was usually preferred by the Jews as a place for prayer, as affording facility for ablutions (see Josephus, 'Ant. Jud.,' xiv. 10, 23; and other passages quoted by Alford). The phrase, *οὐ ἐνομιζέτε προσευχὴ εἶναι*, should be rendered, not as in

the R.V., but more nearly as the A.V., where a prayer-meeting (of the Jews) was accustomed to be held; i.e. this particular spot was the usual place where such Jews or proselytes as happened to be at Philippi met for prayer. It also appears from Epiphanius ('Hær.,' 80, § 1, quoted by Alford) that the Jews usually had their *προσευχή*, whether buildings, or open spaces, *ἐξω πολέως*, outside the city. The wayside crosses are of the nature of *προσευχή*.

Ver. 14.—*One that for which, A.V.; to give heed for that she attended, A.V.; by for of, A.V.* A certain woman, etc. Whether her personal name was Lydia, or whether she was commonly so called on account of her native country and her trade, must remain uncertain. Thyatira was in Lydia. Lydian women, from the time of Homer downwards, were famous for their purple dyes; and it appears from an inscription found in Thyatira, that there was there a guild of dyers, called *οἱ βαφεῖς* (Lewin, ii. 214). One that worshipped God (*σεβόμενῃ τὸν Θεόν*); i.e. a proselyte. So in ch. xiii. 43 we find *οἱ σεβόμενοι προσήλυτοι*, the devout or religious proselytes. And so *αἱ σεβόμεναι γυναῖκες*, the devout women. And so, in ch. xviii. 7, Justus is described as *σεβόμενος τὸν Θεόν* one who worshipped God (see too ch. xvii. 4, 17). In ch. x. 1 Cornelius is spoken of as *εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν Θεόν*. It has been suggested that possibly Enodias and Syntyche (Phil. iv. 2) were of the same class, and converted at the same time as Lydia. There is certainly a coincidence between the mention of the women in ver. 13 and the prominence given to the Philippian women in Phil. iv. 2, 3. It is well observed by Chrysostom, on the latter part of this verse, "The opening of the heart was God's work, the attending was hers: so that it was both God's doing and man's" (comp. Phil. ii. 12, 13). *To open (διανοίγειν)* is applied as here to the heart (2 Macc. i. 4); to the eyes (Luke xxiv. 31); to the ears (Mark xvii. 34, 35); to the understanding (Luke xxiv. 45); to the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 32); "Cor clausum per se. Dei est id aperire" (Bengel).

Ver. 15.—When she was baptized; showing that St. Paul, as St. Peter (ch. ii. 38, 41; x. 47), as Philip (ch. viii. 38), as Ananias (ch. xxii. 16), as our Lord himself (Mark xvi. 16), had put holy baptism in the very forefront of his teaching (comp. Heb. vi. 2). And her household (comp. ver. 33; 1 Cor. i. 16; 2 Tim. iv. 19). This frequent mention of whole households as received into the Church seems necessarily to imply infant baptism. The exhortations to children as members of the Church in Eph. vi. 1, 2, and Col. iii. 20, lead to the same inference. *Come into my house, etc. A*

beautiful specimen of true hospitality; comp. 1 Pet. iv. 9; Heb. xiii. 2; 1 Tim. v. 10; 3 John 5—8; also 2 Kings iv. 8—10, where, however, the Greek word for "constrained" is ἐκράτησεν, not as here παρεβίασται, which only occurs elsewhere in the New Testament in Luke xxiv. 29. In the LXX. it is used in 1 Sam. xxviii. 23; Gen. xix. 3 (Cod. Alex.) 9 (in a different sense); 2 Kings ii. 17; v. 16. Her large hospitality does not bear out Chrysostom's remark as to her humble station of life.

Ver. 16.—*Were going to the place of prayer for went to prayer, A.V. and T.R.; that a certain maid for a certain damsel, A.V.; having for possessed with, A.V.* The place of prayer. The ἡ προσευχή of the R.T. undoubtedly means "the place of prayer," the *proseuche*. They went there, doubtless, every sabbath. What follows happened on one occasion after Lydia's baptism. A spirit of divination (πνεῦμα Πύθωνος, A.V.; Πύθωνα, R.T.). "Πύθων denotat quælibet ex quo πῦθεσθαι datur," "any one of whom inquiry may be made" (Bengel). It was a name of Apollo in his character of a giver of oracles. Delphi itself, where his chief oracle was, was sometimes called *Pytho* (Schleusner, s.v.), and *Pythius* was a common epithet of Apollo. The name Python (Plut., 'De Defect. Orac.,' cap. 9) came thence to be applied to a ventriloquist (Hebrew אִיב, or to the spirit that was conceived to dwell in ventriloquists and to speak by them, just as in Hebrew the ventriloquist was sometimes called אִיב בָּעַל (or בָּעֵלָה if a woman), the owner of a spirit of divination, or simply אִיב, a diviner (see 1 Sam. xxviii. 7 (twice) for the first use, and Lev. xx. 27; Deut. xviii. 11; 1 Sam. xxviii. 3; for the second). In some passages, as 1 Kings xxviii. 6 and Isa. xxix. 4, it is doubtful whether אִיב means the ventriloquist or the spirit. The feminine plural אִיבוֹת (Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6; 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 9; Isa. viii. 19) seems always to denote the women, who, like the damsel in the text, practised the art of ventriloquistic necromancy, whether really possessed by a spirit or feigning to be so. The word πύθων is only found here in the New Testament. The LXX. usually render אִיבוֹת by ἐγγαστρίμυθος. Gain (ἐργασία), literally, *work, craft, or trade*; then, by metonymy, the *gain* proceeding from such trade (ch. xix. 24, 25). By soothsaying (μαντευσμένη). So one name of these ventriloquists was ἐγγαστρίμαντις.

Ver. 17.—*Following after . . . cried out for followed . . . and cried, A.V.; servants for the servants, A.V.; proclaim unto you for show unto us, A.V. and T.R.* This testimony of the spirit of divination to the doctrine of St. Paul is analogous to that of

the unclean spirits who cried out to Jesus, "Thou art the Son of God" (Mark i. 23—26; iii. 11; Luke iv. 34, 35; and St. Paul's dealing with the spirit of divination was similar to that of our Lord's with the evil spirits in the cases referred to. What was the motive of the damsel, or the spirit by which she was possessed, for so crying out, or St. Paul's for so silencing her, we are not told. Perhaps she interrupted him, and diverted the minds of those to whom he was preaching. And he did not like the mixture of lies with truth. The motive of *secrecy* which was one cause of our Lord's rebuke to the spirits would not apply in the case of St. Paul.

Ver. 18.—*She did for did she, A.V.; for many for many, A.V.; sore troubled for grieved, A.V.; charge for command, A.V.; it for he, A.V.; that very for the same, A.V.* Command (παράγγελλω, us in ch. i. 4; v. 28; and ver. 23 of this chapter, etc.). The only other instances of exorcism by St. Paul are those recorded in ch. xix. 12 and 15. The question of possession by spirits is too large a one to be discussed here. It must suffice to notice that St. Paul in his action (as our Lord before him had done), and St. Luke in his narrative, distinctly treat *possession*, and *expulsion* by the power of Christ, as real.

Ver. 19.—*But for and, A.V.; gain for gains, A.V. (ἐργασία, as ver. 16); laid hold on for caught, A.V.; dragged for drew, A.V.; before for unto, A.V.* The rulers (οἱ ἀρχόντες); the *archons*. Meyer thinks these were the city judges, or magistrates (who always had their court in the ἀγορά, or forum), by whom Paul and Silas were sent to the prætors (στρατηγῶν) for judgment. So in Luke xii. 58, the litigants go to the ἀρχόν first, and he sends them on to the κριτής, or judge, who orders them for punishment. This seems a more probable explanation than that commonly adopted (Howson, Alford, Renan, Lewin, etc.), that the ἀρχόντες and the στρατηγοί mean the same officers. No reason can be conceived for Luke's calling them ἀρχόντες if he meant στρατηγῶν, or for naming the office a twice over when once was sufficient. Nor is it likely that officers of such high rank as the duumviri, or prætors, as they had come to be called, should be always in the forum, to try every petty case (see articles "Colonia," "Duumviri," and "Prætor," in 'Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities'). It seems, therefore, that Meyer's explanation is right. At Athens the general term ἀρχόντες was applied to inferior magistrates, as well as to the nine archons ('Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities,' "Archon").

Ver. 20.—*When they had brought for brought, A.V.; unto for to, A.V.; they said for saying, A.V.* The magistrates; στρα-



ἡγούμενοι, *i.e.* the prætors. Philippi, being a colony, was governed by Roman magistrates called duumviri, corresponding to the two consuls at Rome. But we learn from Cicero that in his time the duumviri in the colonies were beginning to be called prætors, a little previously used only at Rome ('De Leg. Agrar.' 34), and to be preceded by lictors (ἀσπιδουχοί of ver. 35). Two inscriptions have been found in which the duumviri of Philippi are mentioned (Lewin, p. 216).

Ver. 21.—*Set forth for teach, A.V.; it is for are, A.V.; or for neither, A.V.* Romans; in a special sense, as members of a colony.

Ver. 22.—*Rent their garments off them for rent off their clothes, A.V.; beat them with rods for beat them, A.V.* Beat them; ῥαβδίζειν, marking that they were beaten by the lictors, or ῥαβδοῦχοι (see ver. 35). The phrase rent ... off (περιρρήξαντες) is only found here in the New Testament, but it is frequently used of stripping off garments, in classical Greek and in 2 Mac. iv. 38; and by Josephus ('Ant. Jud.,' vi. xiv. 6) of David rending his garments—a circumstance not mentioned in the Bible narrative (1 Sam. xxx. 4).

Ver. 24.—*Cast for thrust, A.V.* In the stocks; Greek τὸ ξύλον, sometimes called ξυλοπέδη. The ξύλον was of different forms, and used as a punishment. Sometimes it was a kind of heavy wooden collar put on the neck of a prisoner, whence the phrase, Εὐλόω φημοῦν τὴν αἰχέναν (Aristoph., 'Nubes,' 592), "To make fast his neck in the pillory." Sometimes it was what Aristophanes calls πεντεστέργγον ξύλον, "stocks with five holes," two for the feet, two for the hands, and one for the neck. Here, as in Job xiii. 27 (where the LXX. word is ἐν κυλίσματι, Hebrew ῥ, a stake, or log), it is simply "the stocks."

Thus Paul and Silas, first stripped and beaten, then put in the inner prison, and further made fast in the stocks, were treated with the utmost possible rigour and severity. See St. Paul's vivid reminiscence of the outrage (1 Thess. ii. 2, ὀβρισηθέντες).

Ver. 25.—*But about for and at, A.V.; were praying and singing hymns for prayed and sang praises, A.V.; were listening to (imperfect) for heard, A.V.* Prayed, etc. Their *proseuche* was now the dungeon and the stocks. But, though they were but two, the Lord was in the midst of them, according to his promise, and manifested his gracious presence in the striking deliverance which follows. Were listening to them; ἐπακροδοῦμαι, found only here in the New Testament. But the substantive, ἐπακρόβασις, hearkening ("to hearken," A.V.), occurs in the LXX. of 1 Sam. xv. 22. What a scene! The dark inner dungeon; the prisoners fast in the stocks, their backs still bleeding and smarting from the stripes; the companionship

of criminals and outcasts of society; the midnight hour; and not groans, or curses, or complaints, but joyous trustful songs of praise ringing through the vault! while their companions in the jail listened with astonishment to the heavenly sound in that place of shame and sorrow.

Ver. 26.—*Prison-house for prison, A.V.,* as ch. v. 21, 23. All the doors were opened. This would be the natural effect of the earthquake. Bands (δεσμά). St. Luke always follows the Attic usage of δεσμός, in the neuter (comp. ch. xx. 23; Luke viii. 29). St. Paul follows the Hellenistic usage of δεσμός, in the masculine (Phil. i. 13; see Jer. ii. 20; v. 5; Hab. iii. 13). In many instances (genitive and dative) it is, of course, impossible to determine whether the word is masculine or neuter.

Ver. 27.—*The jailor being roused for the keeper of the prison awaking, A.V.; sleep for his sleep, A.V.; drew for he drew out, A.V.; was about to kill for would have killed, A.V.; escaped for been fled, A.V.* This readiness to kill himself rather than incur the disgrace of failure in his charge is characteristic of the Roman soldier (comp. ch. xxvii. 43).

Ver. 29.—*And he called for lights for then he called for a light, A.V.* (φῶτα is the accusative plural, though not a very common form; φῶς is often used in the sense of "a lamp," *cr.* as we say, "a light"); *trembling for fear for came trembling and, A.V.*

Ver. 31.—*Jesus for Jesus Christ, A.V. and T.R.; thou and thy house for and thy house, A.V.*

Ver. 32.—*They spake the Word, etc., unto him for they spake unto him the Word, etc., A.V.; with for and to, A.V.* Observe that Paul and Silas preached the Word of God's saving health to the penitent and contrite jailor before they thought of having their own smarting wounds washed and dressed. Observe, too, that they spake the Word of life to illuminate his soul before they administered the sacrament of baptism.

Ver. 33.—*Immediately for straightway, A.V.* Washed their stripes. Mark the jailor's faith working by love. He and all his. The phrase seems purposely adapted to include family, slaves, and all under his roof. If the conversion of the jailor and his house was sudden, the circumstances which led to it were of unusual power—the earthquake, the loosing of the prisoners' bands, the midnight hour, the words of grace and love and life from the apostle's mouth.

Ver. 34.—*He brought them up . . . and set for when he had brought them . . . he set, A.V.; rejoiced greatly for rejoiced, A.V.* (ἀγαλλιάσθαι, a stronger word than χαίρειν, Matt. v. 12; 1 Pet. i. 6); *with all his house, having believed in God for believing in God with all his house, A.V.* The word παῖς

rendered "with all his house," occurs only here in the New Testament. But it is used by the LXX. in Exod. i. 1 and elsewhere, and by Josephus, etc. The more classical form is *πανοικεσι* or *πανοικησια*. The A.V. gives the meaning better than the R.V. The faith and the joy were both common to the jailor and his house.

Ver. 35.—*But for and, A.V.* The magistrates; *i.e.* the pretors or duumviri, as in ver. 22 (where see note). The serjeants; *i.e.* the lictors (ver. 22, note).

Ver. 36.—*Jailor for keeper of the prison, A.V., as ver. 27; reported the words . . . saying for told this saying, A.V. and T.R.; come forth for depart, A.V.*

Ver. 37.—*Publicly for openly A.V. (δημοσιᾷ, ch. xviii. 28; xx. 20); men that are for being, A.V.; do they now cast for now do they thrust, A.V.; bring for fetch, A.V.* Men that are Romans. We have exactly the same phrase in ch. xxii. 25, on a similar occasion, where also is the only other example of the word *ἀκατάκριτος*, uncondemned. *Ἀκριτος* with a like meaning ("untried," "without trial"), is common in classical Greek. The Latin phrase is *indicta causâ*. By the *Lex Valeria* (A.U.C. 254), "Ne quis magistratus civem Romanum adversus provocationem necaret neve verberaret," every Roman citizen had a right to appeal (*provocare*) to the populace against any sentence of death or stripes pronounced by the consuls or any other magistrate; and by the *Lex Porcia* (A.U.C. 506), no Roman citizen could be scourged. Silas, it appears from the phrase, "us . . . men that are Romans," was also a

*civis Romanus*. But nothing more is known about it. It does not appear why their exemption as Roman citizens was not made good before; but probably the magistrates refused to listen to any plea in their haste and violence.

Ver. 38.—*Reported for told, A.V.*

Ver. 39.—*When they had brought them out they asked for brought them out and desired, A.V.; to go away from for to depart out of, A.V.*

Ver. 40.—*Departed; i.e.* from Philippi, according to the magistrates' request in ver. 39. This is much clearer in the T.R. and A.V. than in the Revised Text and Version, because the same word, *ἐξελεῖν*, is used in both places. The R.T. in ver. 39—*ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ* destroys the reference, and rather suggests that they merely "went out" of Lydia's house, which they had "entered into." It appears from the first verse of ch. xvii. ("they had passed," etc.) that St. Luke stopped at Philippi, and probably made it his head-quarters till St. Paul's last journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem, some six or seven years later<sup>1</sup> (ch. xx. 6). What became of Timothy we are not expressly told, only we find him at Berea in ch. xvii. 14 and 1 Thess. iii. 5; and at Corinth (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 1 Thess. iii. 6). Probably he accompanied St. Paul, but is not named, being still only a subordinate person in the mission.

<sup>1</sup> Lewin (vol. i. p. 221) thinks that Luke composed his Gospel during this period, referring to 2 Cor. viii. 18.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—5.—*The choice of a fit person.* The ordination of Timothy to be a minister of God, and St. Paul's fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Thess. iii. 2), was a great event in the Church's history. The character of her individual bishops and priests has always been a matter of paramount importance, and in nothing do we see the wisdom of the great apostle more conspicuous than in the choice of his fellow-labourers. He who refused Mark, because he was not sure of him, discerned in Timothy, young as he was, that simplicity of purpose, and that sober and docile zeal in the service of Christ, which made him a fit instrument for the most arduous missionary work. Many qualifications concurred in Timothy. There was his thorough grounding in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures through the pious care of his mother and grandmother, which gave strength to his own faith, and made him capable of reasoning with the Jews. There was his Jewish birth on his mother's side, which, when he was circumcised, would make him acceptable to the circumcision; and there was his Gentile birth on his father's side, which would enable him to sympathize with the Greeks, and would dispose them to listen to him. There was his early acquaintance with the afflictions of the gospel, which he had seen so bravely borne by the apostle at Iconium and at Lystra, and which he had dared to share by taking upon himself the Christian profession in the very heat of the persecution; and there was his warm attachment to St. Paul as of a son to his father. All this Paul saw in him, and foresaw that, of all his missionary band, none would exceed Timothy in devotedness to the Lord's work, and in singleness of aim for the Church's good (Phil. ii. 19—22).

The event fully justified his expectations. Not Luke, the beloved physician; not Silas, the faithful brother and indefatigable evangelist; not Titus, his "own son after the faith," were greater helps and comforts to him than this young disciple from the rude community of Lystra. In him he had one like-minded with himself—always ready for work, always seeking the things that are Jesus Christ's; never ashamed of the gospel, ready to endure afflictions as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The great day will reveal the value of Timothy's service in the kingdom of God. The lessons for us to learn are: for the bishops of the Church, to give their utmost care to make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of the Church; for the persons chosen, to throw their whole heart and soul into the work, that it may be well and worthily done; for the Church at large, to pray very earnestly that God would raise up faithful, wise, and earnest men to preach his gospel, to feed his flock, and so to build up his kingdom that the Churches may be "established in the faith, and increase in numbers daily."

**Vers. 6—15.—*The call.*** The great difference between sacred and profane history is not so much that the events are different, or the human motives of the actors are different, or even that God's providence works differently, but that the secret springs of the will of God, directing, controlling, and overruling, are in sacred history laid bare to view by that Holy Spirit of God who knows the things of God. In ordinary life the servant of God believes that his steps are ordered of God, and that the providence of God, which ordereth all things in heaven and earth, orders them for his good. But he is not preceded in his own goings out and in his comings in by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, as the journeyings of the children of Israel were. In like manner, when we read the history of the marvellous diffusion of the everlasting gospel among the various nations of the earth, and mark how in one part of the globe the successful missionary has selected some particular country for his evangelizing labours, and has founded there Churches full of light and love, while other countries have either been untrudged by the foot of the evangelist, or have yielded no return to the labours of the preacher of glad tidings, we recognize the directing will of Almighty God, albeit, no visible sign or word indicated where the net was to be cast into the deep waste of waters, and no voice of the Holy Ghost erected a barrier of prohibition. If we ask for some reasons why this difference should exist—say in the case of St. Paul—it will not be difficult to find several satisfactory ones. 1. It was of great importance to establish in the Church with certainty the conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ was still carrying on from his throne in heaven the work for which he left the bosom of the Father, and was incarnate, and suffered, and rose again. In the terrible odds under which a handful of simple, unlearned men had to contend against all the powers, all the intellect, and all the vice, in the world, it was of infinite moment that the voice and the wisdom and the power of their exalted but unseen Lord should be manifested from time to time working with them and for them, and thus assuring them of the victory. Hence the rushing wind, and the tongues of fire, and the leaping cripple, and the down-stricken liars, and the heavenly visions, and the opening of the prison doors, and the angelic ministrations, and the blinded sorcerer, and all the other puttings forth of the power of Christ. Hence, too, the immediate orders of the Holy Ghost: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul;" "Preach not the Word in Asia;" "Go not into Bithynia;" "Preach the gospel in Macedonia;" "Be not afraid; hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee in this city." But these tokens of Christ's close watch over his Church in the fulfilment of her mission were not for Paul and Barnabas only; they were for the servants of Christ in all ages and in every place. They needed not to be repeated. They have established for ever the truth of the Lord's promise, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." 2. We have intimated above that the ordinary mode by which the purpose of God is manifested, that such or such a country should not be evangelized at such or such a time, is by the failure of the missionary's effort. It is a good discipline for the Lord's servants to work here and there without knowing where their labours will be blest, and where they will be fruitless; and to learn by such experiences how entirely ineffectual their best exertions are unless the Lord give the increase. But in the case of one like St. Paul, whose immense labours were to be crowded into a short space of time, this ordinary process may have seemed to the Divine wisdom too slow, and withal too wasteful. No other



Paul would be forthcoming, when his life dropped, to take up and carry on his apostolic work; and therefore we may suppose that, to economize Paul's labours, God dealt with him in the extraordinary way of direct injunctions and prohibitions. He was sent at once to sow the seed in the ground that would receive it. He was peremptorily hindered from sowing it where it would not bear fruit. And thus the Church derived the largest possible amount of benefit from his devoted work. 3. We may note one more reason. The great harvest of souls reaped by St. Paul in the very places where he was sent is another proof of the omniscience of the Holy Ghost, and that the apostle's several missions were really ordered and directed by him. When Simon Peter, at the Lord's bidding, after a night of fruitless toil, let down the net and enclosed such a multitude of fishes that the net brake, and the overladen ships were in danger of sinking, it was manifest that he who had given the command was indeed the Lord. And so, when at the call of the Holy Ghost Paul went to Antioch, and Cyprus, and Pisidia, and Galatia, and Macedonia, and Achaia, and preached the Word there, and everywhere there sprang up flourishing Churches, the countless disciples at Antioch, and Lystra, and Iconium, and Philippi, and Thessalonica, and Corinth were so many distinct witnesses that he had indeed a *call*, and that he who called him was with him wherever he went. It is an immense encouragement to us to be assured by the success of so many of our missions at the present time that those who labour in them have received their secret call from Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Vers. 16—40.—*Truth and falsehood.*** The domains of truth and falsehood are in their own nature entirely distinct. This cannot be more emphatically expressed than in the inspired words which speak of God as the God of truth, and of Satan as the father of lies. The two realms are not only distinct, but contrary the one to the other. No greater injury has been done to the cause of truth than by the employment of weapons of falsehood in its defence. And, on the other hand, the most effective weapons used in defence of falsehood have been those which were taken from the armoury of truth. The section before us exhibits a remarkable example of the champions of truth and falsehood, and of the characteristic weapons of each. To take first the case of the masters of the soothsaying girl. With them it was a simple matter of gain. What their Pythoness taught, what direction her soothsaying took, whether her divination supported Judaism, or heathenism, or Christianity, was all one to them, so that their own gains were great. They were good friends and well-wishers to Paul and Silas as long as their own profits were consistent with the spread of the gospel. But when the damsel was silenced, and the silver stream of the rewards of divination was dried up, their anger knew no bounds. With the keen fury of disappointed avarice they turn against those whom before they seemed to honour and respect. But how shall they wreak their vengeance against these "servants of the most high God"? It would not do to speak the simple truth and say, "These men who 'show unto us the way of salvation,' have robbed us of our gains in the name of Jesus Christ. Help us to punish them." It would not do to say, "The only fault we have to find with them and their teaching is that we are no longer able to delude simple people, and cheat them out of their money." And so they look about for some nobler, and thereby more effective plea. "Are we not Romans? Is not Rome the mistress of the world? Is not Philippi a Roman colony? Is it fitting that the imperial majesty of the city should be despised and insulted here in the midst of the fasces of the lictors, and in the very presence of the prætor? Or again, Is not law the very bond which binds the world together? Is not law that which all good men honour and obey? Are not the noble Roman people a law-abiding people? And shall a few ignoble and despicable Jews dare to teach customs and persuade men to observe laws contrary to the laws of Rome, and contrary to the duty of Roman citizens? Out upon such lawless insolence! In the name of the majesty of Rome, rise up, ye people, and put these intruders down. In the name of holy law, rise up, ye magistrates, and chastise these presumptuous offenders against the law! Vindicate the fair fame of Philippi, and silence these blasphemers against the truth!" So spake these lying champions of their own sordid interests; and with the weapons of righteousness wielded by their unrighteous hands, they gained a short-lived victory. And now for the champions of truth. Paul and Silas, as they are portrayed in the simple, lucid narrative of the Acts of the Apostles, stand before us as two men of transparent

integrity, living for one object—the presentation of truth to the minds of men for their present and eternal good. We cannot detect in them one single selfish purpose—neither the love of gain, nor the love of power, nor the love of praise, nor the love of ease. What we can detect—it stares us in the face—is an intense love of God, an entire devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, an unquenchable charity for the souls of their fellow-men, both Jews and Gentiles, and a calm, steady hope of the appearing and kingdom of their unseen Lord. We see also a sense of duty urging them to every step they take, and prompting every word they speak. Well, they preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. They convince, they convert, they receive their converts into the Church of God, all the while leading lives of blameless purity, quietness, and order. Then they are seized, they are ignominiously beaten with many stripes, they are dragged off to prison, their feet are made fast in the stocks, and they are left alone in the dark. But it was no darkness to them. In the exercises of prayer and praise the light of Heaven illuminated their souls. The gospel which they believed and preached was no less precious in its promises, its hopes, its power, its present light and joy, in that inner dungeon, than it had been by the water-side or in the crowded synagogues of Antioch. The Master whom they served was no less glorious, no less worthy of all their love and all their service, than he had ever been. They knew that his truth would endure from generation to generation. They were not moved from their steadfastness. Then came their wonderful deliverance. And how did they use it? In preaching the same truth to their jailor, in repeating it to the house of Lydia, in carrying it forth from city to city, and being never silent, but continuing to bear witness to the truth as long as their life endured. And are they silent now? I trow not. The truth has not changed; but in heaven it is seen more fully, in more unclouded lustre, in fuller proportions of breadth, and length, and height, and depth; and they that know it there have fuller powers of thought and speech with which to magnify it than the most gifted of them possessed on earth.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—5.—The Church's duty and reward. I. THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH. 1. To encourage and develop Christian talent.** When Paul went to Lystra he found the Church there speaking well of a young disciple, Timotheus. This convert was "well reported of by the brethren" (ver. 2), and "him Paul would have to go forth with him" (ver. 3). The Church praised him who was praiseworthy; and the minister trusted and encouraged him who was trustworthy, leading him on to higher things, and placing him in a position in which his consecrated powers would have freer range and extended usefulness. The Church of Christ seldom does better than when it nourishes youthful piety, and paves the way for the exercise and development of growing talent. **2. To make timely concession.** "Him Paul took and circumcised because of the Jews" (ver. 3). Paul thought these men wrong in their views, but he consulted their sensibilities for the sake of concord and progress. The true triumph is, not to work well with those with whom we are in full sympathy, but to co-operate, without friction, with those between whom and ourselves there is variance of view or difference of disposition. There is no possibility of rendering any considerable service in the cause of Church organization, without a large measure of the conciliatory spirit, and without a considerable amount of actual concession. Not the man who carries his point by obstinate persistency, but he who yields at the right time and in the right spirit is commended of his Lord. **3 To be faithful to all compacts.** (Ver. 4.) Probably Paul and Silas might have safely said nothing about the decision at Jerusalem; the people of Asia Minor would have heard nothing about that. But they were scrupulous to carry out the compromise in all its particulars. Fidelity to an undertaking is a clear and urgent Christian duty; the Church or the minister who should slight it would be doing something which is not only unworthy but discreditable, displeasing to Christ, injurious to itself or himself. **4. To keep in view consolidation and extension:** to preserve a fair and wise proportion between these different branches of Christian work. Under the hand of Paul and Silas the Churches of Asia "were established in the faith, and increased in number" (ver. 6). The missionaries were not more desirous of extending the line of active

evangelization than of securing the ground which they had taken. This is Christian wisdom. The two complementary works should always go together; one will minister to the other; one cannot shine without the other.

II. THE REWARD OF THE CHURCH. This is twofold. 1. *To glean individual results.* True and keen must have been Paul's gratification to find such a disciple as Timothy at Lystra. Well was he recompensed for the cruel stoning he received in that town by gaining such a "beloved son" and valuable helper in his work of faith and love. And it is the individual results of the Christian teacher's labour which are his most appreciated reward now. The recovery of that lost one; the decision of that vacillating one; the consecration of that promising one;—these are his joy and crown. 2. *To witness general progress.* To find that "the Churches are established," and that they are "increasing in number;" to know that the cause of Christ is advancing, that his kingdom is coming, that his name is being honoured, and his praises sung by those who had been ignorant of his dying love;—what joy, what intense and pure satisfaction, is this! Other sources of delight may pass, or they may leave a stain rather than a tint behind them; but this is a gladness that abides, and which purifies and ennoble the heart of him who is made happier thereby.—C.

Vers. 6—10.—*The call of God and the appeal of man: a missionary sermon.* Christian life, when it has any strength and vigour, is an expansive thing. It pushes out in all directions. It asks what it can do to extend the kingdom of God, what is the sphere in which it can best exercise its missionary zeal. It must be guided by two things—

I. THE CALL OF GOD. Paul and Silas went whithersoever they were directed. They forebore to go to some places because the way was closed by the Divine hand (vers. 6, 7); they went to others because "they assuredly gathered that God had called them" (ver. 10). God does not vouchsafe to us now such plain and indubitable signs of his will as he granted in apostolic days; we have no such visions and voices as they had to guide them. Nevertheless he does direct our steps. He either calls us or "suffers us not" to go where we had designed to work, by some method, of his Divine procedure. 1. He may enlighten our minds by enlarging our faculties; so that, though we are not conscious of any special influence, we see clearly what is the right and wise course to pursue. 2. He may inspire us with such promptings that we feel assured that we are being moved by his own hand. 3. He may, by his providential ordering, shut us out from, or shut us up to, the path in which he would not, or would, have us walk. It is for us to inquire reverently what is his will, which way he does not desire us to take, when he calls us to preach the gospel, and then promptly and cheerfully to obey.

II. THE APPEAL FROM MAN. (Ver. 9.) This vision "appeared to Paul in the night." We need not wait for the night in order to have a vision and to hear a voice, in which men will cry, "Come over and help us." If we had but the ear to hear "the still, sad music of humanity," we should have borne to us on every wind the pitiful plaint of the sin-stricken children of men. We should hear: 1. The cry of conscious spiritual distress. There are those who know the hollowness of their old superstitions, or are vainly looking out for the truth; from those who are groping in the darkness, we may well hear the cry, "Who will lead us into the light of life?" 2. The prayer of inarticulate distress. There are countless multitudes that hunger and thirst for they know not what. They have empty, aching, longing hearts, with boundless capacities. These hearts are unfilled, unsatisfied, and they are inarticulately but earnestly pleading for the bread of life, of which if any man eat he shall never hunger more. There are also the vast multitudes of the suffering—of the sick, of the lonely, of the disappointed, of the bereaved. These are praying us, with silent but strong supplication, to send the knowledge of the Divine Comforter, of him who alone can bind up the broken heart and heal its wounds. 3. The appeal of pitiful degradation. The advocates of slavery used to contend—for lack of better argument—that those who were in bonds were contented with their condition. As if this were not the very heaviest indictment against the cause they pleaded! Surely the fact that slavery made men and women satisfied with degradation and dishonour was the most damaging impeachment which could be framed! And it is the fact that so many thousands of those who were created for purity, wisdom, worship, righteousness, eternal life, are satisfied with the darkness and death of sin,—it



is this which constitutes the most eloquent appeal to take them that enlightening truth which will awake them from their shameful apathy, inspire them with a manlier and nobler hope, and satisfy them with a treasure which cannot fade, with a joy that abides for ever, with a life which is eternal and Divine. Unchristianized humanity stands ever before the eyes of a living Church and pleads with a powerful if not a passionate entreaty, "Come over and help us!"—C.

**Vers. 11—15.—The opened heart; or, the power of Divine gentleness.** Promptly obedient to the heavenly vision, Paul and Silas went "with a straight course to Samothracia," and by Neapolis to Philippi. There, eagerly awaiting a sacred opportunity, they "abode certain days." They availed themselves of the weekly gathering "at the river-side," where women, who everywhere are the most devout, were wont to meet for prayer. The whole narrative suggests the by-truths: 1. That we should instantly carry out the will of Christ when we are distinctly assured of it. 2. That we should choose the largest and likeliest sphere—"the chief city" (ver. 12)—for our activity. 3. That those who are least honoured of man are they who find most solace in the service of God. 4. That those who go reverently to worship are in the way to secure a greater blessing than they seek. God reveals himself in unexpected ways to us, as now to Lydia: going to render the homage of a pure heart, she returned with a new faith in her mind, a new hope and love in her soul, a new song in her mouth. 5. That holy gratitude to God will show itself in a generous, constraining kindness toward man—a kindness that will not be refused (ver. 15). But the lesson of our text is the truth which we learn concerning the gentle power of God in opening the closed heart of man: "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul" (ver. 14). We may regard—

**I. THE FACT THAT HE DOES WORK THUS UPON US.** If we appeal to our own consciousness we find that it is the case. Often God's Spirit so touches and moves the human soul, that it is only just aware, at the time, that it is being wrought upon; or he so operates that we can only tell, by comparing past things with present, that we have changed our spiritual position. It is found by us to be the fact that the Lord is not in the storm, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but rather in the "still small voice."

"Silently, like morning light,  
Putting mists and chills to flight,"

he lays his hand upon us and touches the deepest springs of our nature. Any faith which does not include the action of God's gentle power in awakening, enlightening, renewing, reviving, the souls of men is utterly inadequate and completely fails to cover the facts of human experience.

**II. THE WAY IN WHICH HE WORKS.** God opens our hearts in different ways. 1. Sometimes it is by making us gradually sensible of our own unworthiness, and therefore of our need of a Divine Saviour. 2. Sometimes by drawing our thought and love upward, higher and higher, from the true and pure and gracious that are found in the human, to him who is the true and pure and gracious Friend Divine. 3. Sometimes by constraining us to feel dissatisfied with the seen and temporal, and to seek our joy and our treasure in the unseen and eternal.

**III. THE MEANS BY WHICH HE WORKS.** These are manifold: the sacred Scriptures; the services of the sanctuary; the friendship of the holy; the opening, enlarging experiences of life; the trial which, though not startling and terrible, is yet arresting and revealing.

**IV. THE EXCELLENCY OF HIS WORK.** Some may suppose that they have more to be thankful for when they can point to one quickening and arousing circumstance in their life, sent of God to awaken and change them. But there is as much of the Divine in the opening of the flower by the light of the morning as in the upheaval of the lava by the fires beneath the crust of the earth; and there is as much of Divine power in its gentler action on the soul as there is in its more palpable and more terrible manifestations. It is open to us to think that there is even greater kindness shown in the former than in the latter. It behoves us (1) to recognize the reality of his gentle power; (2) to bless him most gratefully for his exercise of it upon ourselves; (3) to seek that he would put it forth

on those with whom we have to do—children, etc.; (4) to watch for its operation in them, and to co-operate with God therein.—C.

Vers. 16—25.—*Five truths from Philippi.* We learn—

I. THAT SACRED TRUTH IS SOMETIMES FOUND ON IRREVERENT LIPS. (Ver. 17.) 1. Sometimes in *mockery*, as with this poor Philippian slave. She probably caught up the words she heard Paul use, and in the spirit of ribaldry uttered them again. So men have sometimes preached or sung in the spirit of mere raillery and indecent mirth. 2. Sometimes in *insincerity*; when those who have no care to secure a livelihood by honourable means resort to religion as a source of income. It is melancholy to think of the thousands who have adopted the preacher's function as a worldly calling, on whose lips the sacred truths of the gospel would be as ill placed as on those of this damsel of Philippi. 3. Sometimes in *inconsiderate enthusiasm*; when they who are animated by a desire to do good, but allow themselves to act without due thought, use the most sacred terms with a freedom which is very near to flippancy. In all cases the irreverent use of Divine names and heavenly truths is to be strongly if not sternly deprecated.

II. THAT SELFISHNESS WILL NEVER WANT A GARMENT WITH WHICH TO HIDE ITS UGLINESS. (Vers. 18—21.) The masters of this poor woman, when they found that "the hope of their gains was gone," determined to rid themselves of men who were actually sacrificing their temporal interests to the cause of truth and of humanity! So they incited the mob, and brought Paul and Silas before the magistrates, and played the part of indignant citizens, whose religious equanimity was being shamelessly disturbed (vers. 20, 21). They would not have ventured to show themselves as they were, in the nakedness and ugliness of utter selfishness; so they borrowed the flag of patriotism to cover themselves withal. The worst of this kind of sophistry is that men in no great time deceive themselves, even if they do not deceive their neighbours. Sin soon imposes on itself; it thinks itself benevolent and humane when it is mercenary and cruel.

III. THAT ERROR IGNORANTLY IMAGINES IT CAN EXTINGUISH TRUTH BY FORCE. The magistracy of Philippi, well sustained by the violence of the mob (ver. 22), caused truth, in the person of its advocates, to be beaten and imprisoned. It doubtless imagined that there would be an end of this new and "pestilent" doctrine. But as the names of these prisoners were to be honoured long ages after those of their judges had been forgotten, so the truths which they proclaimed were to be preached and sung many centuries after those bonds were broken and those dungeon walls had crumbled. How vain the magistrates' court, the scourge, the gaol, the scaffold, when it is the living truth of the Divine Redeemer of mankind which men are trying to stifle or to slay (Phil. i. 12—14).

IV. THAT FAITHFUL SERVICE OF CHRIST IS SONGFUL EVERYWHERE. Songs in the sanctuary are as natural as they are common; that is to say, when we are worshipping that God who is our God, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Their devotees could not praise the "gods of the nations," because there was nothing in their character to call forth reverence, trust, gratitude. But the followers of Jesus Christ find in him everything for which to pay homage and to present thanksgiving. But it is not only in the act of Divine worship, but at all times, that "his praise is in our mouth." Even in prison—in such a prison as that of Philippi, and after such lacerating blows as they had endured—Paul and Silas "sang praises unto God." They rejoiced that they were "counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name" (ch. v. 41; see Matt. v. 10—12). And if the faithful servants of Christ could "lift up to God the voice of praise" in the dungeon, those who are engaged in his service now should carry about with them everywhere the spirit of sacred song. We should, we *can*, cherish the spirit of gratitude and holy joy in the home, in the place of business, in the social circle, in every sphere of our activity. For as there is no engagement in which we should not be honouring Christ, in which we should not be realizing his presence and enjoying a sense of his Divine favour, so is there none in which we may not find a source of satisfaction, in which we may not find a reason for holy song.

V. THAT ABUNDING CHRISTIAN LIFE OVERFLOWS TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL. "And the prisoners heard them" (ver. 25). Not that Paul and Silas sang for their benefit, but that abounding happiness in suffering for Christ overflowed and made itself felt by

all around. How these men, whose mouths, if opened at all, doubtless poured forth oaths and curses, must have been struck with surprise, and perhaps smitten with shame, to hear these two prisoners singing psalms of praise! If our Christian life be not the poor, ill-fed, shallow streamlet it *may* be, but the well-fed, strong, swift, ever-flowing river it *should* be, then shall we live to bless others even when we are only acting to express our own souls.—C.

Vers. 26—34.—*God in the earthquake.* God does not always manifest himself “in the still small voice” (1 Kings xix.); there are times when he makes himself known in other forms. We learn from our text—

I. THAT GOD IS SOMETIMES, IF NOT OFTEN, IN THE TERRIBLE. (Ver. 26.) “By terrible things in righteousness,” as well as by gracious things in mercy and in love, does he answer us. He *is* in the earthquake and in the fire and in the great and strong wind, sometimes. He was, here. The earthquake was the moving of his hand, the utterance of his voice, the expression of his mind. It was his condemnation of human injustice and cruelty; it was his declaration on behalf of human innocence and worth. As in nature we have the solemn as well as the pleasant, the fearful as well as the delightful, the storm as well as the sunshine, so in God’s providential dealings with us, and also in his revelation of himself in Jesus Christ, we have the awful and the stern as well as the benignant and the merciful, the rebuke as well as the invitation, punishment as well as reward, death as well as life.

II. THAT GOD’S AIM, IN THE TERRIBLE, IS TO AWAKEN THE SLUMBERING SOUL. “The keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep” (ver. 27). It was the sleep of sin from which this earthquake called him, rather than from bodily slumber. God aroused his spirit thus; and from a guilty, deadly unconsciousness of all that is most precious in the human heart, he awoke to “newness of life.” “God doeth it that men should fear before him” (Eccles. iii. 14). God sends the earthquake; he shakes the very ground under men’s feet; he makes their life-prospects to rock and quiver; he threatens with loss, or he permits terrible bereavements, to compel men to think of those things which otherwise they would continue to disregard, to make men see the solemn realities which are about them, to place judgment and eternity in full view before their eyes.

III. THAT SPIRITUAL AGITATION STILL ASKS THE OLD QUESTION AND RECEIVES THE OLD REPLY. Let men say what they will about “refined selfishness,” it will always remain true that a man’s first duty to God is the duty he owes to himself; that the first thing a man awakened by God has to do is to consider how he can come into a right and happy relation to the God with whom he has to do; in other words, to ask him how he can “be saved,” how his sin can be forgiven and himself be taken back into the favour and the service of the living God. And the answer of Paul will always be the reply of the Christian teacher. The earnest seeker after salvation must be directed to a Divine Saviour, in whom he can “believe.” For us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to *accept him for all that he offers to be to us*—to accept him (1) as the Saviour in whom we trust for Divine mercy; (2) as the Friend to whom we give our heart; (3) as the Lord to whom we dedicate our life.

IV. THAT THE ACCEPTANCE OF JESUS CHRIST IS TO BE FOLLOWED BY DISCIPLESHIP AND PROFESSION. The converted jailor, so far from being satisfied with his first change, gave his mind to the further and fuller understanding of the truth (ver. 32); moreover, he showed the sincerity of his conversion by being baptized into the Christian faith (ver. 33), by carrying with him all the members of his household, and by offering hospitality to those whom he had treated as criminals and now welcomed as friends. We, too, if our faith be genuine, shall (1) be eager to learn more of Christ and of his holy will; (2) make profession of our change of heart and life; (3) do all we can to befriend and further those who are the ambassadors of Christ.

V. THAT FAITH IN CHRIST TURNS PASSING PLEASURE INTO ABIDING JOY. “He rejoiced” (ver. 34). He had often laughed and been merry before; now joy takes up its home in his heart. “*Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*”—C.

Vers. 35—40.—*Christian remonstrance.* We may learn—

I. THE PITIFUL END OF PRECIPITANCY. (Vers. 35, 38, 39.) These magistrates of Philippi had hastily adopted the opinion of the clamorous multitude; they had made



no sufficient investigation; they had not ascertained the citizenship of the prisoners at the bar; and now they have to pay for their precipitance. They send a sneaking message to the prison, "Let those men go;" thus virtually confessing themselves in the wrong. Then when Paul refused to be thus dismissed, and placed himself in the position of one whose legal rights had been violated, they were fain to come in person, and beg of their own prisoners to go on their way! To such dishonour did a hasty and unfaithful use of their power bring these men. They who are in any office, whether in sacred or secular affairs, should remember that rashness is certain to suffer in the end, that precipitancy in judgment conduces to the shame of him who judges, that we should take ample time and make full inquiry before we condemn and punish. Otherwise judging others, we condemn ourselves and bring down the blow on our own head.

II. THE CHRISTIAN DUTY OF REMONSTRANCE. Paul refused to be ignominiously dismissed, having first been illegally punished. He uttered an indignant, a fervent remonstrance (ver. 37). He declined, being innocent and wronged, to be treated as if he were guilty and as if he had nothing of which righteously to complain. It is often our Christian duty to act in the same way. In this matter there are: 1. Two laws to which we may make our appeal: either the *law of man*, which the magistrates of Philippi had now broken, and which Paul claimed they should have regarded; or the *law of God*, the law which makes its demand on every human conscience, requiring truth, equity, respect, etc. When this is palpably violated, we may make our appeal to it against the iniquity and ill usage of our fellows. 2. Three laws by which we must be limited: (1) The law of purity. We are not at liberty to indulge in remonstrance if there is nothing in our mind but self-assertion; the spirit by which we must be animated is a sense of wrong having been done, and of a righteous resentment of that wrong. A remonstrance which is nothing more than an attempt to recover something for ourselves, into which the feeling of pure indignation against evil does not largely enter, is not worthy of the name; that is only a contention. (2) The law of innocence. We must take care that we have clean hands, or we shall not be in a position to upbraid others. Too often there are faults on both sides, and those who use the language of remonstrance are open to damaging retort. Only the innocent are at liberty to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" (see Rom. ii. 17—23). (3) The law of considerateness. We must consider what is the probable effect of remonstrating. If the outpouring of our indignation, though it would relieve our own mind, would endanger the comfort, the liberty, or even (as is possible) the life of others, then we should restrain ourselves and be silent. If remonstrance, though it should bring down bitterness or even blows on ourselves, is likely to benefit others, then it becomes our Christian duty to let loose our tongue and give play to our indignation. The question to be considered is—Will utterance honour Christ and benefit our fellows? According to that verdict let our behaviour be.

III. THE DIGNITY OF INNOCENCE. These magistrates will always present to the Christian eye the picture of undignified officialism; first hastily condemning, and then ignominiously retreating. Paul and Silas will ever be to us the types of true dignity; first patiently suffering, then loftily refusing to be secretly dismissed, then composedly uniting and comforting the disciples, and then quietly departing. They who have God on their side are in a position to be above the fretting and fuming of the world, to possess their souls in patience and in calmness.—C.

Vers. 1—8.—*Paul and Timothy.* In the intercourse of the great apostle with Timothy, and the history of the latter, we have an interesting episode.

I. THE YOUNG DISCIPLE. His case shows: 1. *The blessing of a pious mother.* The mother's love gives force to all her lessons, sanctity to the earliest of life's recollections. "Knowing of whom thou hast learned them." 2. *The blessing of Christian society.* He enjoyed the testimony of the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. Not only the good influences we receive from Christian brethren, but the certificate which their good will and commendation affords us, is to be considered. 3. *The blessing of sound instruction.* He had an apostle for his teacher. There were things he had "heard and been assured of" from those weighty lips. 4. *These advantages turned to account.* He was the pride and consolation of his mother, and the more so as her husband was an unbeliever. He was an ornament to his community, as we may see from the Epistles to Timothy, from Phil. ii. 22 and 1 Cor. xvi. 10; and a joy and support of the apostle.

II. SPECIAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR CHRISTIAN MOTHERS. 1. How many examples have we not of devout mothers in the Old and New Testaments! Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Mary, the mother of Jesus; Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children; Eunice, the mother of Timothy. And with these may be compared Monica, the mother of Augustine. 2. A mother's prayers are as guardian angels about the life of her child; and the godly son possesses the happy harvest of a mother's tears. 3. The mother's early influence is the best preparation for future service. Paul laid stress upon it; and the happy connection between himself and the disciple—so fruitful for both and for the world—rested upon the early foundation laid by the mother.—J.

Vers. 9—15.—*The journey to Macedonia: the happy beginning.* The transplantation of the gospel into Europe was a great epoch. We see the seed-corn of the kingdom germinating and growing from small beginnings.

I. THE PROVIDENTIAL INDICATIONS. It came, as on many occasions to prophets and men called and sent of God, in a vision of the night. The Macedonian appears and cries, "Cross into Macedonia, and come to our aid!" From the 'Confessions' of St. Patrick, the evangelist of Ireland, a dream is cited, in which, by a letter addressed to him, with the inscription, "The voice of the Irish," he was called as a missionary to Ireland, where he had spent some years of his youth, having been captured and enslaved by pirates. Let us regard this vision as an allegory of the constant cry of the heathen world, "sitting in darkness and the shadow of death," to the loving sympathy of Christian hearts. "Christians, help poor Patagonians!" is the refrain of a plaintive mission song. It is a cry that rises from the lands of the West to the lands of the East in this narrative; and again it becomes, in the course of history, a cry from the East to the West. It may sound again from now so-called Christian lands, should our candlestick be removed from its place, and the gospel light pass over to those who prove themselves more worthy to enjoy it. May we know the day of our visitation!

II. THE HAPPY CONSEQUENCES. 1. *There was quick apprehension of the Divine command.* They gathered (Luke glides into the narrative) that God had called them to preach. The presence of the Divine Leader, manifesting itself in such indications, is everything in these new enterprises. "Jesus, still lead on!" He was already before them in Macedonia, and the vision assured them of this. Here is a great lesson. So soon as we are assured of the direction of the Divine will, let us be prompt to obey. 2. *They enjoyed a straight course to their destination.* If a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes his enemies to be at peace with him, and the winds and waves to be calm as he proceeds. Their confidence grew at every step of their cruise. "'Hearty welcome!' cried Europe" (Bengel). 3. *The arrival.* They came to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia. The arrival at a great city for the first time is an impressive moment in one's life. Who can see the dome of St. Peter's in the distance the first time without a thrill? The city is the epitome of mankind. Great cities have great vices, but likewise contain eminent virtues and flowers of piety. Poets, prophets, and apostles have generally found their sphere in the busy town life. 4. *The leading of events.* The sabbath day came, and the Christian missionary band repaired to the banks of the river. How good the simple devotional habit! We are ever in the way of getting good and doing good when in the way to prayer. How simple and natural the true method of fulfilling a Divine call!

"The trivial round, the common task,  
Will furnish all we ought to ask."

We do not need to create opportunities; they lie to our hand. Work is always waiting for willing and called workers. All places are suitable for prayer: the field (Gen. xxiv. 63), the shore (ch. xxi. 5), the prison (ch. xvi. 25), and here the river. 5. *The woman's heart conquered to Christ.* Not by conversion *en masse*, but by gaining the hearts of individuals, does the gospel proceed. The kingdom of God is like seed sown in the ground. When it takes root in but *one life*, how great may be the results! The noble Church at Philippi, which gave the apostle so much joy, sprang from the conversion of Lydia. How beautiful is the description: "Her heart the Lord opened"! The teacher's voice strikes vainly upon the ear, until God opens the heart. But the heart may refuse to open, and the word runs, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."

if any man will," etc. True works of a heart divinely and graciously opened are named. Here is *humility*—she submits herself to the judgment of Christians more advanced. *Teachableness, thankfulness to God, busy love and kindness, the setting of a good example.* She dedicates her house, with herself, to the service of Christ.—J.

Vers. 16—18.—*The witness of evil to the good.* I. THE SOOTHSAYING DAMSEL. Here was a girl living upon imposture, and bringing gain to her masters out of traffic in fancies and lies. Magic and soothsaying trades upon the imagination and wishes of the popular mind. Instead of leading the mind to the truth, it leads the mind to the habit of postponing truth to device and interest. It is the very opposite temper to that of true Christianity.

II. HER WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. It was doubtless involuntary, extorted from her by overpowering conviction. So does the truth not seldom come from strange lips. The girl felt the contrast in these men to herself. Here were servants of God; she was the servant of lucre and self-interest. They with truth upon their lips, and their lives in their hands; she with cunning lies and deceits, framed to defraud men of their substance and injurious to their souls. They lead on the way to salvation and blessedness; she, to disappointment and ruin.

III. THE CONDUCT OF THE APOSTLES. It gives a rule to us. There can be no fellowship, and therefore no pact nor even momentary compromise, between light and darkness. Truth needs no such help, and never have such devices been known to forward its course. Compliments are to be distrusted by the worker for God. The tinder of vanity is ever ready to be inflamed. The temptation is to put down to our own merit that which is the work of Divine grace. Jealousy against evil is disarmed, watchfulness relaxed. Good men may thus be seduced from the service of God into that of men, or worse. Before firmness and loyalty to conscience the evil and seducing spirits flee.—J.

Vers. 19—34.—*Joy in tribulation.* "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution." "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom." The truth of these Pauline sayings had often been tested by experiences, of which this at Philippi was one of the most significant. Here, too, was one of the places where he learned to say, "Thanks be to God, who always maketh us to triumph!"

I. SELF-INTEREST IN ARMS AGAINST THE TRUTH. So often—especially in our day—are men's interests and profits on the same side with Christianity; we need to be reminded that godliness and gain (in the immediate and lower sense) are not identical. 1. *The root of opposition to the truth.* They saw their hope of gain was gone. Wherever men strike a blow against pure morality, sound and unrefuted principles of teaching, we may rely upon it some "vested interest" is at bottom the cause. The progress of the gospel has put an end to many false callings, and, let us hope, will put an end to many more. 2. *The weapons of falsehood.* False accusations, misrepresentations. Malice knows that the most effective mode of attack is the *indirect*. If you cannot disprove a man's arguments, you may blacken his character. If his private life is blameless, try to show that his principles are dangerous to society. If he speaks unwelcome truth, accuse him of breaking up the general peace and good feeling (1 Kings xviii. 17; Amos vii. 10). The wolf in the fable! Crafty use of catch-cries is another instrument of passion and malice. The great Roman name and power is assailed, and that by hated and despicable Jews! This the first time that Roman law is invoked against the Christian. Observe the *half-truth* in the arguments of malice. Christianity *does* make men restless—it frightens the evil out of false repose. It *does* un hinge old customs, and was destined to overthrow the Roman pride. Thus was the multitude excited, as often under such circumstances, and, amidst howls of rage and gusts of indignation, the apostles are roughly handled, their garments torn; they are beaten and cast into close confinement. So do malice and passion often appear to gain their will, while they are preparing for themselves a defeat.

II. INWARD JOY AMIDST OUTWARD DARKNESS; INWARD LIBERTY IN BONDS AND PRISON. At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns. What seems to be the gate of death and of hell may be converted by prayer and song into the gate of heaven, the avenue to Paradise. 'Tis not the place that sanctifies the spirit, but the spirit that sanctifies the place. Great the triumph of the spirit, to sing, not within the safe walls



of the church, but behind the barred doors of the dungeon! Sweet are "songs in the night"! It is suffering which wrings the very soul of music from the heart; and to the prayers thus uttered, a deep *Amen* echoes in heaven.

III. DIVINE POWER MADE MANIFEST TO SENSE AND SPIRIT. 1. *The earthquake.* This was the outward answer to the prayer and song. Heaven and earth are moved at the prayer of the holy. As it trembled awfully through the prison, opening doors and loosening bonds, hearts also were smitten and flew open at the touch of God. 2. *The agitation of the soul.* The jailor wakes, at first to anguish and despair. The prisoners have escaped; he is a lost man! There is a sudden temptation to suicide, and at the eleventh hour crime is averted and salvation received. "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here!" Those who love allegorical treatment of texts may find matter here. Duty and the will of God are firmer bonds than handcuffs and the stocks. "We are all here" cry the servants of God, with the witness of our word, the pattern of our life, the intercessory prayer of our love. But a new fear, more awful than the former, seizes on the jailor's soul: "What must I do to be saved?" When it comes to this question in earnest, the soul is ripe for salvation. One such cry brings all the mercy of Heaven down. 3. *The great question.* It is not unprepared for. He had heard the apostles praying. Doubtless seeds of truth, dropped into his mind on some former occasion, now germinated and swiftly broke into life. As the earth breaks forth into greenness after a thunderstorm, so was new life born in the man's soul in the midst of the dread earthquake. 4. *The great answer.* Believe! "'Faith' is all your wisdom," said the sceptical emperor Julian. True! and let us abide by it. Affiance in the Heliest and Divinest, for time and for eternity; this and this alone is wisdom. Faith in the ever-blessed One makes blessed. In him we obtain a Divine Friend in the home; a holy domestic order; sweet domestic peace; assured domestic stability; a portion in the heavenly home. 5. *The great decision.* It is rather implied than expressed; shown by practical results than by words. Faith works in the jailor's heart by love. His thankfulness to Christ is shown by attentions of thoughtful kindness to his servants. The stern keeper of the stocks is transformed by the magic of love into the physician and the host. The jailor has become a "prisoner of Jesus Christ." Having washed his now honoured guests from the stains of outward defilement, he receives at their hands the baptism of spiritual purity. The scene closes amidst purest joy. Thus do the darkest places and most repulsive associations become glorified and idealized by the Spirit of the living and loving God. The prison becomes a chapel; a dread place of judgment; a school of penitence and faith; a home of love and kindness; a place of new birth and new life.—J.

Vers. 35—40.—*Unexpected deliverance.* I. THE SECRET WORKING OF THE HEART UNDER DIVINE POWER. The decision of the magistrates to let the apostles go free is not explained. Paul and Silas had given no account of themselves. But the conscience of the magistrates had been smitten. While his servants suffer in silence, God conducts their affairs. The coincidence must have struck the jailor, and filled his heart with joy. Sore would have been the trial to the jailor's new faith had he received command to throw his now honoured guests into stricter confinement. Such coincidences, although nothing can be demonstrated from them, may nevertheless well convey to the believing heart the sense of an ever-working Divine love.

II. THE PROTEST OF THE APOSTLES. To slink out of prison at the bidding of the jailor, as if they were escaped convicts, was not agreeable to Paul's sense of right. They were Roman citizens. Cicero, in eloquent words, had said that it was a crime to flog a Roman. In this case they had been beaten, imprisoned, thrust into the stocks, treated with every harshness and indignity. Paul stands upon his rights as a Roman citizen: "Let them . . . fetch us out!" Christian meekness requires us to reserve our strength, to subdue our anger, and to prefer the good of another to our own pleasure; but not to connive at injustice and submit to wrong. The Christian ought to maintain his honour and insist upon his rights, when his reason is not wounded self-love, but injured sense of right and zeal for God's honour; when his course is not that of a rude independence, but that of right and calm self-vindication; and if his object is not the overthrow of the oppressor, but his conviction and improvement.

III. THE HONOURABLE DISMISSAL. Alarmed at the attitude of Paul, the magistrates

send to beg the apostles to depart. Thus they receive their dismissal, "Go in peace!" from the lips of friend and foe alike—from the friends to whom they have brought peace and salvation; from the foes who dare not touch the anointed of God; from the Master himself, who has been with them in their trouble, whose promises have sustained, and whose providence has watched over and delivered them.—J.

**Vers. 1—5.—Paul's second missionary journey commenced.**

**I. ENLARGED WORK THE FRUIT OF ENLARGED CAPACITY AND EXPERIENCE.** 1. In his own spirit—by faithful service and abundant grace received. 2. In his higher standing among his brethren. The sympathy and confidence expressed by the Churches of Antioch and Jerusalem lifted up Paul's spirit to a higher level. 3. In the clearer course opened by the settlement of the controversy as to the position of the Gentile converts.

**II. INSTRUMENTS PREPARED TO MEET GREATER DEMANDS.** *Timothy* specially gifted to be Paul's companion. His Greek education. His mother's and grandmother's piety. His father possibly a proselyte. He himself Paul's son in the faith. *Silas* more Jewish. The Holy Spirit guides us when we seek out helpers in dependence on higher wisdom. The young minister had the confidence of the Churches, where probably he had exercised his gifts. Those who are selected as candidates for the ministry should be approved and well reported of, and in some degree tried. Paul's own judgment was sustained by that of others.

**III. IN ALL WORK DIFFICULTIES AND SCANDALS SHOULD BE SHUNNED, even at the cost of suppressing personal feeling.** When it was a question of maintaining principle, Paul would not consider Jewish prejudice; when it was a question of conciliating and preparing the way for the gospel, he would put his own broader views in the background. An example showing that promises and conciliation can be mingled in the same character; a warning against self-assertion.

**IV. THE INFLUENCE OF A WELL-MAINTAINED CHURCH ORDER ON THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF SPIRITUAL WORK.** There was no despotism of Jerusalem over the Gentile Churches, but these were decrees ordained; not the decrees of those who sought dominion over the faith of others, but the decisions of wise, good, inspired men, who spoke under the influence of the Spirit. We should obey the will of the Spirit, whether we hear it from Jerusalem or from any other quarter. A true, humble, and zealous desire to be strengthened and to increase will be the best preservative against schism. There is no inconsistency between liberty and reverence. They support one another.—R.

**Vers. 6—10.—A true epoch in the history of the gospel: advance from Asia to Europe.**

**I. SUPERNATURAL GUIDANCE LED THE WAY.** 1. The messengers naturally inclined to continue their work within narrower limits. Much against advancing West. Unknown region. Great demands in the more educated heathenism of Europe. Possibly the Jewish element was powerful in Asia, and therefore some religious basis to work upon. But all such considerations put aside when the mind of the Spirit manifested. 2. The Spirit of Jesus clearly pointed the way Westward, whether by miraculous indications, or by providential circumstances too plain to be misunderstood. Troas was reached in a waiting, inquiring state of mind. 3. The decisive commandment was given by vision to Paul. Not a mere dream, but a prophetic vision, which, being accompanied by a supernatural impression of its Divine origin and meaning, left no doubt on the mind.

**II. THE CHANGE OF THE SPHERE OF LABOUR from Asia to Europe fruitful in results.** 1. On the Gentile world—in the direct assault on heathenism in its stronghold. 2. On the character of Paul himself. He was fitted for a higher work than preaching to the semi-barbarous tribes of Asia Minor—where great as the success was, it would be necessarily almost limited to the region where it was obtained. To touch Greece was to open a thousand doors to the world at large. 3. On the development of the Christian Church. It was necessary that Christianity should reveal to the world its superiority to all merely human systems of philosophy; that it should satisfy the intellectual as well as the spiritual wants of man. Had Paul never visited Europe, we should not have had his Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, nor probably that to the Ephesians; for his own views of the Church were raised to a higher level by his contact with the larger world of thought and life.—R.

**Ver. 9.—***The cry of a perishing world after Christ.* “And a vision,” etc.

**I. HUMANITY WITHOUT THE GOSPEL.** The Macedonian life representative. 1. The social failure of Rome. The corrupt state of society. The loss of liberty. The lack of real advancement. Help required in every department of men's lives. 2. The intellectual failure of Greece. Contradictions of philosophy. Neglect of the poor and ignorant. Follies of heathenism. Worship of human nature itself. Awful vices by the side of wonderful development of mental faculties. 3. The spiritual destitution of the world. Idea of God. Degradation of the masses. Comparison between the state of the Greek world and the state of the Jewish. Nothing like synagogues. 4. The Macedonian a type of the moral helplessness of men, both in heathen nations and in the heathenish portion of Christendom. “Come over and help us.”

**II. THE CHARGE OF THE SPIRIT TO THE CHURCH.** 1. We must shut our ears to all other voices but that of the Holy Ghost; as, e.g. reasonings about the future destiny of the heathen; attempts unduly to exalt the uninspired books of heathen religions; exaggerations of difficulties and discouragements; pretended special regard to home claims. “Look to the marching orders.” “Go over and help them.” 2. As God speaks to his most eminent servants, let the voice of the Spirit command us through them. If they tell us an enterprise is charged upon them, we must support them with all our might. If Livingstone says Africa is open, then follow his lead, even though at great cost, and let there be no looking back. 3. The missionary enterprise is a great lesson to the Church to find its blessedness in listening to the cries of needy souls. An extended sphere demands a deepened faith and zeal. If we cannot go over with a true gospel and with a self-denying spirit, let us stay at home; if we carry the power of God with us, then we shall find, in the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, not only the reward of a satisfied conscience, but the elevation of our own faith and the glory of our Jerusalem. A larger Christianity has been taking the place of the old and narrow religion of former days, since the Spirit was poured out, and we sent the Word forth to the ends of the earth. We help ourselves when we help others. Wonderful signs of the times, showing that God is opening the minds of men to the universal claims of the gospel. All things uniting to say, “Go into all the world,” etc.—R.

**Vers. 11—15 (or ver. 14).—***The opened heart.* “And a certain woman named Lydia,” etc. Study of personal history specially helpful. A few broad strokes make up the picture. Fill in the outline from human nature and experience. Describe the circumstances. Philippi a local metropolis. In the midst of perishing heathenism a germ of spiritual life. Country market-place outside the gate. Devout women, Jewesses and proselytes. The Old Testament read there. Prayer offered. Without Christ they could not be made perfect. Influence of praying women. The contrast. The great heathen city, the small gathering of pious souls waiting for consolation. An image of the world with the true Church beside it waiting to take possession. “Stone cut out of the mountain.” Apostles sent to lift up the little one into a thousand. Lydia the first convert from Europe. The message came as an answer to prayer.

**I. THE GOSPEL WAITING TO FIND A PLACE IN THE HUMAN HEART.** 1. Devoutness, religiousness, not all that is required. Apostles preached Christ to religious people. Christianity a positive system of truth, which must be known and received. The moral side of it not separable from the spiritual. This specially seen in the mission of the Church to the world. If Lydia was herself to preach to her neighbours, she must be taught. 2. Attention to truth a work in the heart. Curiosity, habit, sentiment, all may fall short of bringing the mind to lay hold of truth. Personal application. The spring of affection opened. Love of Jesus shed abroad. Faith fixed on its objects.

**II. THE GRACE OF GOD WORKING THROUGH HUMAN AGENCY.** Paul preached; the Lord opened the heart. 1. The distinction must be recognized in all ministrations. 2. The record of the apostolic ministry an example. The greatest preachers may fail. If they succeed, to the Lord's Name be the praise. 3. We are cast by such a mystery on prayer. 4. The opened heart is the pre-requisite to the changed and consecrated life.—R.

**Vers. 16—18.—***The kingdom of light revealing itself.* On the borders of Europe where many false spirits were at work. Divination and soothsaying, the resort of men in their blindness—a testimony at once to their moral helplessness and their recognition



of a higher power. The credulity of men was made a source of sordid traffic both by philosophy and false religion. Hence the trouble in the mind of Paul. It was not for his own sake, but for the gospel's.

I. **TRUTH NEEDS NO FALSEHOOD TO HELP IT.** The Church of Rome has acted very differently. Had it not been stopped, the gospel would have been regarded at Philippi as another form of divination. Simplicity the greatest strength.

II. **THOSE THAT ARE RESTING ON THE ROCK CAN AFFORD TO WAIT.** "*After many days*" the spirit was cast out.

III. The kingdom of Christ brought into collision with the kingdom of Satan reveals **ITS VICTORIOUS MIGHT.** So throughout the history. "That very hour." The Name of Jesus Christ exalted, all the more for the evil device against it. Mercy to the deluded and miserable. Judgments to the deceivers. The swine and the spirits perish together.—R.

Vers. 19—40.—*The first European persecution.* I. It was in no way instigated by Jews, but it proceeded from **RULERS AND MAGISTRATES**, under the instigation of **HEATHENISH ERROR.** An important distinction. Christianity, when it enlarged its sphere of operations, had to encounter the opposition of: 1. The state. 2. False philosophy regarding it as folly. 3. Heathen priestcraft, fearing the loss of their profitable **superstitions.**

II. The method of persecution was generally through **LAWLESSNESS AND UPROAR.** There was no trial, no proper charge. Only the multitude against them.

III. The gospel brought into light **WHAT WAS GOOD IN THE ANCIENT WORLD**, and drew it to itself. Roman order and discipline is here distinctly on the side of the persecuted, and the persecutors are afraid. So henceforth, when the gospel is seen at work in Europe, we find the Roman law serving it.

IV. God speaks among the heathen by the voice of his **PROVIDENCE** and of **NATURE.** The earthquake assisted the cause of truth. A wonderful testimony to the whole city and neighbourhood.

V. The conversion of the Philippian jailor a **GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION OF THE PERSECUTION.** So always—the wrath of man praises God.

VI. **THE CONTRAST** of the praying and singing prisoners and the terrified authorities a striking testimony to the truth. Lydia and her companions prayed too. The little Church at Philippi, increased by the whole occurrence, "comforted them and departed." "Filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ for his body's sake, which is the Church."—R.

Ver. 25.—*Light in the darkness.* "But about midnight," etc. Power of facts to speak for Christ. The miracles of Christ accompanied his message. "Believe the works." We must push this evidence of facts on unbelievers, because they are not prepared to open their hearts to the truth.

I. **A BRIGHT EXAMPLE OF FAITH.** 1. It overcame fear, shame, suffering. 2. It lay hold of the future—praying and praising, under the influence of hope. The time was midnight, but there was morning in their souls. 3. It was faith which was proved by experience; they remembered past deliverances. "His love in time past," etc.

II. **GOD WORKS WITH HIS PEOPLE.** 1. He opens their lips, when the world would shut them. The inner prison and the stocks cannot silence truth. The audience is there—the prisoners and the Roman jailor. 2. Fellow-workers called in. "The earth helped the woman" (Rev. xii. 16). God is doing much under the surface of events. Streams of providential government unite with streams of spiritual influence. The revival of intelligence and humanism preceding the Reformation. The two great currents of the eighteenth century, spiritual and political, and now science helps the advancement of Christianity. 3. Leave God to find opportunity for us. Be patient, and hope to the end. The trouble of Christianity to the world works out peace.—R.

Vers. 29, 30.—*A remarkable conversion.* "Then he called for a light," etc. The significance of the jailor's case, as a Roman, and almost instantaneously converted, as illustrating the comparative religious freedom of a Roman colony, the openness of the Gentile mind to impression, the yearning of the heart after a true religion prevailing at that time in the better class of people.

**I. AWAKENED ANXIETY.** 1. A realization of personal dangers and need. 2. A forsaking of all other refuges. 3. An appeal for help to those who, by their confidence and peace, showed that they had a better hope.

**II. SINGLE-MINDED INQUIRY.** 1. Different from mere curiosity or speculation. 2. Ready humbly to wait for brotherly sympathy and direction. 3. Casting the will as well as the mind on the truth. "What must I do?"

**III. RISING FAITH.** 1. Salvation possible, therefore sought after. 2. Self-surrender at the feet of the messenger, as expressing desire for the message. 3. Doubtless "the way of salvation," of which the city had heard, was something definitely before his mind as something to be found. Why is not such earnestness universal?—R.

**Ver. 34.—Household salvation.** "And he brought them," etc. The family greatly honoured in the Bible. Patriarchal religion the religion of families. The household the unit of the Jewish nation. All true redemption of society must be through individual conversion, but by way of natural relationship.

**I. THE HOUSEHOLD JOY.** 1. A new beginning. Contrast with the old. 2. A new security—both against the evils of a disordered earth and the infirmities and sins of human life. 3. A new fellowship. A family may be a Church; daily worship, common service; mutual joy, development of individuality in the light of faith.

**II. THE HOPE OF THE WORLD.** 1. Rapid spread of religion when household faithfulness is maintained. 2. Education is the basis of Christian teaching. 3. The young the hope of the Church. 4. The representative character of Christian profession. We cannot assume responsibility for children, but we can surround them with a circle of light. Our baptism should be their baptism, not *instead of* the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but *in view of* it.—R.

**Vers. 1—5.—Apostolic devotion owned.** The opening two little words of the fifth verse must not be neglected. The fifth verse does not merely summarize the incidents narrated in the preceding four verses. It *connects* them as effects with their just causes, or with that which was in part, and as matter of fact, their just cause. Observe, then, that—

**I. THE LOVE OF APOSTOLIC HEARTS ESTABLISHES FAITH IN THE HEARTS OF OTHERS AND INCREASES THE SPREAD OF IT.**

**II. THE KINDLY PASTORAL VISITING OF THOSE OF SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE, AND WHO HAVE BEEN SET AND CALLED OF GOD, AS LEADERS, ESTABLISHES THE FAITH OF WHOLE CHURCHES AND INCREASES THEIR NUMBER.**

**III. THE ACTIVE ZEAL OF THE OLDER AND HONOURED LEADERS IN SEEKING AND ENCOURAGING YOUNG RECRUITS THROWS ENERGY INTO EXISTING FAITH AND PROVIDES DIRECT MEANS FOR PROPAGATING IT.** 1. Paul selects Timothy, observing him to be the *right sort*. 2. Paul recognizes the need of new blood and young blood, and lets the Churches see that he does so. 3. Paul suggests the circumcision of Timothy, as son of a Jewish mother, that no time should be unnecessarily lost in removing objections on the part of the Jewish elements in the Churches he was visiting.

**IV. AN EQUITABLE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DECISIONS OF THE "APOSTLES AND ELDERS," AND A JUST ATTENTION TO ECCLESIASTICAL ORDER, STEADIES THE FAITH RESIDENT IN THE CHURCH AND PROMOTES THE GROWTH OF IT ELSEWHERE.** (Ver. 4.) To try to "put a yoke upon the neck" of any Church is to "tempt God" (ch. xv. 10). To give it true liberty is like giving it air and light.—B.

**Vers. 6—12.—The Spirit's course.** It may be laid down as a canon, that the *facts* marking periods of special gifts and special inspiration and special "dispensations" point to *principles* available for other periods in the whole history of the Church and the world. What might otherwise seem among the driest historical or sometimes almost geographical statements are accordingly threaded together by an invisible bond of connection, which lends them abundant interest. And here, from the apparently bare narration that is given us of where Paul and Silas went, where they did not go, and where they wished to go but were overruled, we may learn—

**I. THE REALITY OF THE SPIRIT'S PROFFERED CONDUCT OF THE CHURCH.**

II. THE ABSOLUTE ERROR INVOLVED IN NOT SEEKING, OR NOT FOLLOWING, THE TRACKS OF THE SPIRIT.

III. THE CLEAR DIRECTION THE SPIRIT MAY BE RELIED ON TO GIVE TO A REALLY FERVENT LOVE, EARNEST PURPOSE, AND ACTUAL ZEAL.

IV. THE CONFIDENCE THAT MAY BE INSPIRED, AMID ALL THE WEAKNESS OF A MERE HUMAN HEART, IN THE UNERRING AND UNFAILING ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SPIRIT.

V. THE "COMFORT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT" FOR THOSE WHO SURRENDER THEIR GOINGS AND THEMSELVES TO HIS LEADING. Devout musings, holy feelings, and right resolves will be as much and more to them than "vision" or dream? Nor would that comfort be least gratefully felt and acknowledged, when across the famed straits Paul heard an unusual voice, in the accents of an all too unusual prayer. At a moment's glance he saw why he had been prevented from halting, nor suffered to turn to the right hand or to the left, that he might the rather now come direct to *Europe*, and there preach and plant the gospel. And to see the meaning of all was comfort and "joy of faith" for him.—B.

Vers. 14, 15, 40.—*The day that looked like the day of small things.* It may be said, indeed, that "the kingdom came not with observation" into Europe. To the silence, modesty, and unostentatiousness of its first steps, nothing seems wanting. The notoriety came, again, not from the studied purpose of its heralds, who did their bidding in so pacific a manner, but from the vain attempt to crush them. Let us notice in some detail what we know from the present passage of Christianity's very first rooting of itself in Europe. Observe—

I. THE OPPORTUNITY THAT WAS EMBRACED BY THE APOSTLE. We must judge that there was little or no choice open to him. We are glad even to take up the position that this, too, was of God. It may be worded, therefore, in this way, that the opportunity Paul used was that which Providence offered. With how many is it the case that opportunity is the very thing which is slighted, unheeded, altogether ignored! The opportunities that life offers, that our existing position offers, that God therein offers, are those that we despise, dreaming of others, which for that very reason, if for no other, may well be withheld! Let us honour, then, the God who sent and the servant who faithfully used this opportunity, by looking at it somewhat minutely. 1. Landed in Europe, some "certain days" seem to have counted for little at Philippi; the only record of them this: "We were in that city abiding certain days." 2. The sabbath day comes, and there is no fine building into which to enter to preach; there is no respectable synagogue—Judæa is far away now; there is no excited and eager crowd as at Antioch to be harangued, with all the skill of the inspired logician and the Heaven-born orator and the faithful gospel preacher. Dull will the hours of this sabbath pass compared with those of many other of late years fresh in the recollection of Paul. 3. The day is nevertheless to be made use of and to be turned to account. And Paul and his companions resolve to join the humble prayer-meeting of a party of women, outside the city and by the river-side. The occasion is unique, pretty nearly as much so as could be. It must be taken from the tenor of the narrative that there were few, if any, men there. But Paul and his companions neither seem to view themselves nor to be viewed as intrusive. And they sat down and in a most informal manner "spoke to the women." It were the essence of preaching sometimes *rather to speak*; and to speak to a few, and to speak appropriately to them and pointedly and unassumingly and kindly. This was the day, and this was the place, and these were the persons, and this was the manner of Paul and his friends, which made up the opportunity that looked so humble.

II. THE FIRST SHOW OF RESULTS. There is one woman among the little group who is to become the first known Christian convert in Europe. And she came from Asia. By all appearance she was a proselyte, and knew and worshipped one God, according to her light and scanty opportunity, among a mere disunited remnant of Jewesses, if it were so indeed. And she was presumably a woman who did a good business, and had a "house," to the hospitality of which she could pressingly invite the new-comers, and invite them to stay there, too, days together (vers. 15, 18, 40). 1. Lydia is a woman not altogether shut off from light and knowledge. 2. She is a woman who owns to her own conscience and does "worship God." 3. She is one of no bigoted conservative prejudice, and she "listens" patiently, respectfully, to what the strangers said. 4. For all that, her heart



was as yet sealed, shut. There may be some light, some knowledge, some movement and life of conscience in a Person, and yet the heart itself be shut to the pure truth of God and of the soul. (1) Sin may keep shut the heart. (2) The pride of nature may obstruct it. (3) Stolid habit may fearfully close it. (4) The simple "love of the world" may effectually exclude all better, higher things from the heart. And something of this kind was the state of Lydia. Nature had closed her heart, or nature had *not* availed to open it, and at this time it was in some material sense *shut*. And the one first result of this occasion was now seen. "The Lord," with his omnipotent power and with his facile grace, "opened the heart of Lydia"—opened it so that "she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul." It is evident that the change that took place within, under the touch of the Lord, led her to attend with ear, with mind, with heart, and with life. For "she and her household" are baptized speedily.

III. A FURTHER GLIMPSE OF RESULTS. 1. A *generous* heart is unlocked. More than one prophet's chamber is found, and more than a meal or a day's entertainment. 2. A very graceful *way* of showing generosity is exemplified. Lydia does not proffer hospitality in any patronizing tone. She begs to be allowed to render it; and rests her urgency on Paul's faith in her sincerity. 3. Lydia becomes installed in that place as one who may be "counted faithful" to give an asylum for the persecuted, and a home to the released prisoners (ver. 40). 4. A strangely significant type is given of that elevation of women which Europe should ere long be destined to witness, and which has been just due to one presence—the presence of Christianity. Since the time of Lydia, what influences for good in the Church of Christ, what very saviours and leaders of the Church, humanly speaking, have women been, whose "hearts the Lord has opened"! Thus the gospel began its course in Europe, thus for "many days" silently, thus condescendingly. And as the Master himself seldom more significantly marked the character of his own condescendingness than in condescending to do the *apparently* little, to heal *only one* out of a multitude, to "choose" only a "few," to fill for a long time but a small space in the eye of the world, so has his true Church and its humbler history rejoiced to share his lot; and when it has done so, has then most testified its own approximation in likeness to him.—B.

Vers. 16—39.—*An illustrious triple triumph of Christianity.* Soft as the step with which Christianity entered the fair fields of Europe, and kindly as the welcome given to it then, its uniform lot was not long in making its appearance. It soon wakens close attention, it rouses strong opposition, it vindicates its genius and rights, and the lustre of its moral victory must often have been felt by the faithful apostles enough of itself to compensate for the persecutions and sufferings they encountered. Rarely was there a more consummate instance of the kind than that here recorded. Let us notice—

I. THE RISE OF THE OPPOSITION, AND VICTORY THEREFIRST. The first note of discord was sounded by an agent unusual but not altogether unknown, and it was unintentionally occasioned by that actor in the whole scene. 1. The damsel possessed by the spirit of divination, possibly responsible in the first instance for being thus the victim of evil powers, may be held to be not responsible in her present conduct. 2. The utterances of spirits of evil by means of her bodily organs of speech need not be supposed to be necessarily the utterances of mockery, or of any evil design to prejudice those who might have listened to Paul, had he and his companions not been advertised by an agent of so unwelcome a kind. It is said Christ "suffered not the devils to speak because they knew him." And the possessed slave spoke what she spoke because she was under the influence of those who really discerned and knew of what sort Paul and Silas were. 3. The objection of Paul may have been due (1) to a repetition, which of itself might turn seriousness into mockery; (2) to the deep grief, that he would inevitably feel that the words of truth should be now, *not* the utterance of intelligent and converted human beings, as such, but of human powers *usurped*, and though under the domination of superior power, not under the governance of superior goodness, but the contrary. 4. Paul is empowered to speak the command of *dispossession*, with which the "many days" cry stopped, and the evil spirit went, and her "right mind" returned to the slave. And from the barest facts of the painful but wonderful incident we learn how tyrannical is the usurpation of the powers of evil; how nevertheless the powers of evil do sometimes press into the service of the truth; how their unsought aid (if aid it

be) is refused by the Spirit of truth and by the true themselves, who will not encourage the evil that good may come; on the other hand, how their designed injury is balked; but finally how, from all the humbling mournful scene, a victory "in the Name of the Lord Jesus" was won by Paul. Whatever it was that was most offensive in what had been taking place was summarily ended, human powers were disenthralled, a whole market of human iniquity was soon closed, if not bankrupt, and the true power was exalted and magnified.

II. THE OPPOSITION ITSELF, AND VICTORY THE SECOND. 1. The opposition was not on account of the religious views or preaching and teaching of Paul and Silas. They were Gentiles and Romans who were the opponents now, not, as so often hitherto, Jews. The cause of the opposition was most radical to the human heart. The miserable slave had been gain to cruel masters, never so cruel as when cruel to humanity, and as her gainfulness was gone their opposition was *come*, and was decided and determined and bitter, and withal *disingenuous*. They pleaded they were Romans, and they forgot to make sure that there was not a sense in which Paul and Silas were Romans to whom it was yet more necessary to show respect. But the cause was stated to consist in what Paul taught as a "Jew." 2. The opposition was conducted in every sort of disregard of justice and order. Angry people and rulers, and magistrates and multitude, are mingled together against a couple of men who had brought a possessed slave to her right mind; and stripes and imprisonment, and innermost prison and stocks, are their punishment, and, it is supposed, the silencing of them. 3. The opposition, instead of silencing them, had taken the means to keep them awake even at midnight, when perhaps every one of their enemies slept. What can they do but pray? But prayer sometimes brings very ready, very present help, and they sang praises, and though the jailor heard them not, other suffering prisoners did. And God above heard, and brought speedy and full deliverance. No stone of the prison building but it moved, no locked door but it opened, no fetter but it was loosed. And immediately the second great victory began to be apparent. (1) The cause of Paul and Silas is one for which miracle and earthquake and Heaven will appear. (2) The jailor's life is saved by prisoners forsooth—those whom he had fastened so securely and so hastily a few hours before. (3) A greater, better life is roused in that jailor, so that his hands to wash the stripes, and his house and his meat and his very heart, are all at the feet of his prisoners, and "he and all his" numbered among the followers of Christ! Wonders like these passed all Philippi had ever dreamed of before.

III. THE ENTIRE COLLAPSE OF THE OPPOSITION, AND VICTORY THE THIRD. 1. When God's judgments are abroad in the earth, the very air is rife of their rumour. The magistrates, before ever day dawned, had heard, if it were only a whisper, what moved them more than the earthquake. They send simplest order that the men be "let go." It is not only humble hearts moved to salvation, that own to the interposition of Paul's God and Saviour; hearts proud, unchanged, and haply unchangeable quake to their centre, and will *try* the shortest way and the least-observed way or *any* way, if they may feel free again to breathe, and free from what is to them the most dread incubus. 2. But the hour of the supreme triumph of the servants of Christ had arrived. They show no hurry to go. They have been silent when the market-place howled around them. But when an almost deathly stillness prevailed that daydawn, and those who were about spoke with hushed and bated breath, a very few, very quiet, but very authoritative words of Paul's lips finally complete the transformation of the scene. What a contrast, and what a proud hour for truth, when Paul pronounces on certain magistrates a sentence of more moral grandeur and far-reachingness, than all the sentences for centuries have pronounced! You can hear those words, and the climax of them, "Nay verily!" Certainly all the rest "went indeed by saying." Nor can we doubt that to God Paul and Silas gave the glory; to Jesus, Master, King, Captain, they gave the glory; to the energetic Spirit of light and power and conversion, they gave the glory; nor took one atom of the proud satisfaction to themselves when the "magistrates came" in person, "and besought" them and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city." What triple triumph Jesus won in Philippi of Europe, when he disenthralled the body and the mind of the slave, when he made the jailor's heart and life all his own, and when he sent the magistrates on their knees to the scourged, imprisoned, but now dictating Paul and Silas!—B.

**Ver. 1.—The character of Timothy.** This young man was so closely associated with the Apostle Paul, and with such complete sympathy shared his thoughts and his work, that he deserves a careful study, and his character will be found to have points of interest from which important practical lessons may be drawn. He is introduced to us in this passage, but we must assume the fuller knowledge of him that is conveyed by historical references in the Acts and Epistles, and by the letters of counsel addressed by St. Paul to him personally. Of him Canon Farrar says, "He was, in fact, more than any other, the *alter ego* of the apostle. Their knowledge of each other was mutual; and one whose yearning and often lacerated heart had such deep need of a kindred spirit on which to lean for sympathy, and whose distressing infirmities rendered necessary to him the personal services of some affectionate companion, must have regarded the devoted tenderness of Timothy as a special gift of God to save him from being crushed by overmuch sorrow." Timothy was brought to Christ by St. Paul's preaching, and the way in which the apostle reminds Timothy of his sufferings at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (1 Tim. iii. 10, 11), suggests that Timothy was an actual "witness of St. Paul's injurious treatment; and this at a time of life when the mind receives its deepest impressions from the spectacle of innocent suffering and undaunted courage. And it is far from impossible that the generous and warm-hearted youth was standing in that group of disciples who surrounded the apparently lifeless body of the apostle at the outside of the walls of Lystra."

**I. THE ADVANTAGES OF TIMOTHY IN A GODLY ANCESTRY.** It is certain that he was of a naturally amiable and affectionate disposition, and had this advantage from his birth. His mother, and her mother before her, were amiable and pious women, and transmitted their natural grace to this young man. It is often observed that children bear the disposition of their mothers; and just such a gentle tone of character as Timothy showed has often been traceable to such a godly ancestry as he had. It may seem as if women had but little work to do; but what a noble mission is theirs if their patient culture of natural disposition gives their children the vantage-ground of amiable and attractive character! Few blessings resting on our life surpass that of the hereditary influence of good and godly ancestors.

**II. THE ADVANTAGE OF A WISE AND CAREFUL EARLY TRAINING.** "Of a child he had known the Scriptures." Show how this involved (1) an early awakening of the intelligence; (2) a guardianship of his youth and young manhood from folly and temptation; (3) a preparedness for the fuller light and truth brought to him by the apostle; (4) a fitness for the Christian ministry to which he subsequently became devoted. It may also be shown how the influence of his early teachers tended to encourage (1) a studious habit; (2) a cultivation of the passive graces almost to the disadvantage of the active. No more beautiful characters are found on earth than those who are naturally amiable, and whose amiability is sanctified by Divine grace.

**III. THE CHARACTERISTIC EXCELLENCES OF HIS SANCTIFIED MANHOOD.** From the Epistles written by St. Paul to him we gather what were the leading features of his character. 1. Great affectionateness of disposition, which made him cleave closely to any one he loved, and enabled him to make cheerful sacrifices for them. 2. Great steadfastness and trustworthiness, so that St. Paul found he could always rely on him. He acted from principle, not mere impulse; and had a strong sense of duty. 3. A studious habit of mind, which, no doubt, made him valuable to St. Paul for his writing work, but became a snare to him, as unfitting him, to some extent, for public ministerial duties. Out of this, and the consequent frailty of his health, came a shyness and timidity which St. Paul urges him to overcome. It has been well said that Timothy is a beautiful example for young men, as "one of those simple, faithful natures which combine the glow of courage with the bloom of modesty."—R. T.

**Vers. 6—10.—The leadings of the Holy Ghost.** Apart from any doctrine of the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, there is a practical realization of his presence, and gracious working in us and by us, which is a source of continuous strength and comfort to the believer. It is this which we find illustrated in the passage now before us. The apostolic conception of the Holy Ghost has not been adequately studied apart from doctrinal theories. It is forgotten that the apostles were Jews, and that help towards the apprehension of this Divine gift and indwelling they must have sought in



their Old Testament associations. The Spirit of God in the prophets must have been to them the model and the foreshadowing of their larger gift. And this must have been their chief thought. All Christ's people are prophets; the Spirit of God dwells in them all, and is the Inspiration of all they say and the Guide of all they do. Their idea of the old prophets is well expressed by St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 21), "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and his words precisely convey the idea which is to be entertained concerning the apostles and first missionaries. In the passage before us the Holy Ghost as the actual present Guide of the apostles, directing them where they may go and where they may not go, is presented to us. Lives that are truly and fully consecrated to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ are taken out of men's own control and committed to the charge of the Holy Spirit; and those who realize such a full consecration find no practical difficulty in following the Divine lead. Reviewing the incidents narrated in these verses, it will be seen that St. Paul expected no external revelations and no miraculous guidances. In whatever way he realized the presence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it was a way in which we may realize it too; and we may set forth two of the ways which are common features of Divine leading in all generations.

**I. THE HOLY GHOST LEADS BY INWARD IMPULSES.** Men's actions are decided upon more subtle motives and considerations than they usually imagine. Perhaps it would be found that very few of them depended upon decisions of the intellect. Some result from careful judgment; some from self-will or passion; some from emotion; and into many men are led by the passing influences of the hour. Men are acted upon by many influences, which reach the mind, the heart, or the will. But the supreme inward influence is that of the Divine Spirit. He has access to every part of our inward being. He can (1) suggest thought for consideration; (2) direct the judgment to wise decisions; (3) move the will to fitting resolves; (4) tone the feelings to right harmonies; (5) and preside over the plans which are formed. It is by missing this relation of the Holy Ghost to the very springs of action within us, that men—Christian men—so often doubtfully ask, "But how can we *know* that we are doing what God would have us do?" Openness to God's inward lead is surely followed by God's response in an inward leading; and when we are set right towards God we may feel sure that the decisions of our judgment and the resolves of our will are divinely controlled and ordered. St. Paul followed the inward feeling that he must not go into Mysia, etc.

**II. THE HOLY GHOST LEADS THROUGH PROVIDENTIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.** These will always be found to match the inward leadings, and they help to give us assurance that we are following in the way that we should go. Nothing is more surprising in our lives than the opening of providential doors. If we will but (1) wait, (2) watch, and (3) pray, the path will surely clear before us, and the Divine finger point us, and the Divine voice in circumstances say, "This is the way, walk ye in it." We may, on this matter, fall into errors which may seriously depress us. 1. We may mistake providences for accidents, and so fail to see God in them. 2. We may cherish the unbelieving notion that God does not work by *things*. 3. We may take up notions of *natural law* which deprive us of faith in God's living working. 4. And we may fail to *wait* for God's providential openings, and *try to force our own way*; so grieving that Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.—R. T.

**Ver. 14.—The opened heart.** "Whose heart the Lord opened." Describe the joy that St. Paul must have felt in this first sign of the Divine blessing attending his labours in a new sphere. If God was with him, opening the hearts of the people, then his labour could not be in vain. Review the circumstances under which the apostle had been brought to Philippi—the night vision at Macedonia, etc. Explain that Philippi was the first city, regarded geographically, not politically. Show the distinction between a synagogue and a *proseucha*. Commend St. Paul's sabbath habits; and describe the scene at the river's side. It is interesting to note that the first Christian convert made in Europe was a *woman*, and a most important part of the work of Christianity in Europe has been the elevation of woman. Fixing attention on the sentence taken for a text, we notice—

**1. THE BRINGING OF A SOUL TO CHRIST IS THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.** The Lord, the Spirit, is the Opener of hearts. Such opening is the necessary beginning of the

work of grace. Mother, friend, minister, have the simple power of agency; none of them can, by any endeavours, reach to the heart and effect the saving change. Illustrate by the way in which the florist produces new colours and new varieties of flower. He carefully sows the pollen grains on the top of the pistil, but he cannot get them down the pistil to fructify the seeds below. The mysterious power of nature can alone accomplish that. Or illustrate by the peculiar kind of stone which may be smashed to pieces, but, if set aright to the blow, will split into useful slabs. God alone can set men right for the influence of the preached Word. It is our duty to bring saving truth and sinful souls together, but with the Lord alone is the opening to receive. Show how this may become an encouragement to all Christian workers who can see that God is working with them, and that in some of those whom they seek to bless the work of grace is evidently begun.

II. GOD THE SPIRIT HAS VARIOUS WAYS OF BRINGING SOULS TO CHRIST. That which describes the work of grace in the heart of Lydia is not said of any one else. It was just the way in which the Spirit was pleased to deal with *her*. We find that in creation God always acts on fixed principles, but he is never trammelled by the necessity for expressing those principles in fixed forms. Landscapes, plants, trees, countenances, minds, all take form upon definite and invariable vegetable, or animal, or mental laws; but no two of them are alike in their form. Infinite diversity is quite compatible with vital unity. It is equally true in the new creation. God has laid down certain principles on which the return of souls to him must be arranged. There must be (1) penitence, (2) humility, (3) faith; but the exact way in which these are to find expression is left undefined. Show, then, how improper it must be to make any one man's experience a necessary model for another man; and consequently how injurious Christian biographies may become to young seekers after God, if such seekers take up the idea that they must think and feel and act precisely as others have done. The workings of the Divine Spirit in man are divinely free.

III. THE GENTLENESS AND THE GRACE OF DIVINE DEALINGS ARE SEEN IN THE ADAPTATION OF METHODS OF CONVERSION TO INDIVIDUALS. Some can only hear God when he speaks in the loud tones of earthquake, storm, or fire. But it is equally true that others pay no heed until there comes to them the "still small voice;" and therefore the voices of God are so graciously varied to men. Illustrations of the variety and adaptation of God's methods may be taken from Scripture. Shepherds from the Bethlehem plains were guided to the infant Saviour by direction of the holy angels; and star-gazing Magi were guided by the sign of the heavenly light. Godless and persecuting King Manasseh was humbled in the dust, put in a prison-house, and prepared by affliction to listen to his fathers' God. The eunuch of Queen Candace was led by Divine providence, and prepared by studious and meditative habit, to see in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah-Saviour of Old Testament prophecy. St. Paul was brought to faith by a sudden and overwhelming revelation suited to convince a man of so impulsive a character. The jailor at Philippi was broken down by terror, and plucked from the very edge of a self-inflicted death. And Lydia felt the constraining power of the story of the Crucified. In each case the grace of Divine dealing may be shown in the adaptation to character and circumstances.

Apply to: 1. Those who have long known the power of God opening their hearts to the truth. What is now needed is the full acceptance of faith. 2. Those just conscious of new feelings and desires. Whence do they come? They must be the Spirit working in you. Whither do they tend? Surely to the faith in Christ that saves. 3. Those who fear that they have had no inward movings of the Spirit of God. Perhaps they are only unnoticed. Maybe that even now you are ready to hear of Christ, the living Saviour, who wants your love and trust.—R. T.

Ver. 17.—*The witness of evil spirits to Christ.* This poor slave-girl was subject to some kind of convulsive or epileptic fits. Brain-disease, and the various forms of hysteria, were very imperfectly understood in the olden times. "Nothing was less understood in antiquity than these obscure phases of mental excitation, and the strange flashes of sense, and even sometimes of genius, out of the gloom of a perturbed intellect, were regarded as inspired and prophetic utterances." General opinion associated such forms of disease with possession of some spirit, good or bad; and it is curious to note

that the great physician Hippocrates attributed epileptic diseases to possession by Apollo, Cybele, Poseidon, etc. "At this period, and long before, people of this class—usually women—were regarded as prophetesses, inspired by the Pythian Apollo." "As a fortune-teller and diviner, this poor girl was held in high esteem by the credulous vulgar of the town." "The fact that St. Luke, who in his Gospel describes like phenomena as coming from *dæmonia*, evil spirits, unclean spirits, should here use this exceptional description, seems to imply that either this was the way in which the people of Philippi spoke of the maiden, or else that he recognized in her phenomena identical with those of the priestesses of Delphi, the wild distortions, the shrill cries, the madness of an evil inspiration. After the manner of sibyls, sorceresses, and clairvoyantes of other times, the girl was looked on as having power to divine and predict, and her wild cries were caught up and received as oracles." Remembering the well-established doctrine that the Bible is not given as a revelation of science, medical or other, we are able to recognize in this narrative simply the general opinion of the age concerning spirit-possession, and we need not affirm that either our Lord, or the apostles, in dealing with such cases, seal for us the truth of this explanation of them. In view of the common sentiment, it was not well that such persons should be allowed to witness to the Christian teachers. Their witness may have been true enough, but it was certainly liable to be misunderstood. No wholly satisfactory explanation has yet been given of the devil-possession recorded in the New Testament, but this much we may fully admit—there was a remarkable accession of spiritual-evil force in the early Christian age.

I. OUR LORD'S TREATMENT OF THESE PHENOMENA. For the apostles followed the example of their Lord. One striking instance may be referred to (Matt. viii. 28—34). Our Lord (1) delivered the victims from the evil power; making this an illustration of his moral and spiritual mission; and (2) he resisted the association of his work with the witness of disease, mania, hysteria, or evil possession. It was necessary that every association of the conjurer should be dissociated from Christianity. Its appeal is to the sober reasonings of the mind and the normal and natural demands of the heart. The gospel is for men in their senses; and it properly refused then, and refuses still, all testimony from ecstasy, spiritualism, jugglery, oracle, or any unnatural forms of excitation. A truth may be sadly disgraced and misrepresented and prejudiced by its champions, though it does not therefore cease to be the truth. The witness of evil spirits too certainly bears for men an evil tone, so Christ refused to permit it.

II. THE APOSTLES' TREATMENT OF THESE PHENOMENA. Something may be due to St. Paul's personal annoyance at the constant repetition of these clamorous cries, which hindered his work, and very possibly disturbed him when talking in the *proseucha*. He may also have felt great pity for the poor suffering girl; but no doubt his chief reason for putting forth the miraculous power entrusted to him was the misapprehension of his character and his work which her witness was likely to produce. Men might be led by her to think that he was possessed by some of the gods, or was a messenger of some of the idols, and so his work would be hindered, as it had been at Lystra. We must remember that the apostles' message was directly antagonistic to paganism and idolatry, and they were right in jealously guarding it from so perilous an association with it. Impress, in conclusion, that Christianity makes its appeal to the intelligence, conscience, and affections; and, then and now, it needs, and it will bear with, no adventitious or questionable aids.—R. T.

Ver. 25.—*Christian triumph over circumstances.* It is hardly possible to exaggerate in describing the sufferings of St. Paul and his companion on this occasion. The frailty of St. Paul's frame and the sensitiveness of his nervous constitution must be taken into account. Moreover, he appears to have hardly recovered from a very serious illness. Canon Farrar says, "It was the first of three such scourgings with the rods of Roman lictors which Paul endured, and it is needless to dwell even for a moment on its dangerous and lacerating anguish. We, in these modern days, cannot read without a shudder even of the flogging of some brutal garotter, and our blood would run cold with unspeakable horror if one such incident, or anything which remotely resembled it, had occurred in the life of a Henry Martyn or a Coleridge Patteson. But such horrors occurred eight times at least in the story of one whose frame was more frail with



years of suffering than that of our English missionaries." With their wounds untended, St. Paul and Silas were roughly thrust into the inner prison, a foul and loathsome dungeon, there to sit for hours with cramped limbs, shivering in the dampness and cold. Everything in their circumstances was against them, and yet "with heroic cheerfulness they solaced the long black hours of midnight with prayer and hymns." They would doubtless sing well-known psalms, and selections may readily be made of such as would precisely suit their purpose. It is a remarkable incident. It is a triumph of character; a triumph of grace; a sublime declaration of what Christ's realized presence can be to the suffering believer. He can give "songs in the night." Making the incidents the subject of meditation, we observe—

I. THE UNITY OF BODY AND SOUL. A unity so complete that the one never can suffer without the sympathetic suffering of the other. If the soul be depressed or distressed, the nervous condition of the body is sure to respond. Vigorous bodily health can never be known when the mind is diseased or the soul overworn and troubled. And, on the other hand, depression of soul comes oftentimes out of pain of body; and as long as the pain is limited the depression continues. It is singular to note that a prolonged little frailty is more trying to the spirit than a sudden and intense distress or pain. The soul seems to make a great effort to meet a great occasion, but fails to resist a continuous wearying influence. Illustration may be taken from various classes of physical and mental sufferers. It may be shown how often spiritual doubt and distress are found to be due to the sympathy between the body and the soul. And, in view of this, the infinite tenderness of God's dealings with us may be urged. Most gracious God, "he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust!"

II. THE DIVORCE OF BODY AND SOUL. It can be said that "as the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day." The records of the afflicted will bear out the statement that, under two circumstances or conditions, the soul may force itself free of the body and rise above bodily reach in the power of its own life. 1. When pain is extreme. Illustrate from martyrology, or from records of great sufferers. There seems to be a possibility of pain reaching such an extreme as to swing the body loose from the soul, and leave the soul free to sing. This we may, perhaps, see in the case of St. Paul; the very intensity of his suffering in part explains his triumph. 2. When the soul-life is strong. Swelling into power under sudden impulse, as in the martyrs; nourished into a holy fullness of vigour, as in the afflicted and diseased, and as in St. Paul.

III. THE FULFILMENT OF DIVINE PROMISES IN THIS MASTERY OF THE SOUL OVER THE BODY. Such promises in the Old Testament as, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," etc. And in the New Testament as, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Impress what a holy witness is made for God by all Christian sufferers who can win calmness, submission, and peace, and even sing their "songs in the night."—R. T.

Ver. 30.—*The jailor's question.* It puts into a single sentence the great cry of the human soul. And yet see how difficult it is to get the soul to realize this its greatest need, and to utter this its greatest cry.

I. MANY OF YOU ARE NOT QUITE SURE YET THAT YOU NEED TO BE SAVED. That is the gravest hindrance to the preaching of Christ to you. You attach very little meaning to the expression. You say, "Saved! Saved from what?" You need to be saved from two things: (1) the penal consequences of your sin; and (2) the moral power of your sinfulness. That is, you need to be saved from all that is gathered up in the word "hell," and from all that is gathered up in the word "self." You are not your own; you are a creature of God's. Your first duty is to love, trust, and obey God. To help you God has made his will known *with sanctions*. Do you think he will fail to keep his sanctions? His "Law is holy, his commandment is holy, and just, and good;" and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Moreover, you are as one stricken with a foul disease, the leprosy of sinfulness. You need to be saved from a foulness that pollutes you, from delusions which vainly seek to shatter you, and from bondages which you are powerless to break. How can a man be just before God, a sinful man be clean in the presence of his Maker? Verily you need to be saved.

II. EVEN WHEN AROUSED TO ANXIETY, MANY TURN ANYWHERE FOR REFUGE RATHER

**THAN TO CHRIST.** Many are like Lot—they will not do just what the angel-messenger commands, they will seek for some little city near to which they may flee; but there are no Zoars now for seeking sinners, they must flee to the *mountain*. Show some of the subtle refuges in which awakened souls try to find shelter and rest; e.g. waiting for deeper conviction; intenser effort to make themselves good; devotion to the externalities of religion; expecting to get more feeling, etc.

**III. EVEN WHEN DRIVEN FROM OTHER CONFIDENCES, AND LED TO CHRIST, MANY OF US CAN SCARCELY BE SATISFIED WITH "ONLY BELIEVE."** The very simplicity of the gospel terms of salvation we turn into a hindrance. Yet this is the gospel—God, of his free mercy, is willing to pardon, deliver, and receive all who seek him, solely on the ground of what his Son has done for them, and is in relation to them. And God is pleased to make their justification depend on their believing in his Son. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life," etc. "By this Man is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins." Does any man now ask, "What must I do to be saved?" The old answer is ever new, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—R. T.

**Ver. 31.—The faith that saves.** Introduce by a review of the incidents connected with the text. Both the prisoners and the jailor heard the songs and prayers of the apostles; and the jailor had in all probability heard of the testimony of the Pythoness (ver. 17), so he was in a measure prepared for sudden conviction. There are historical hints of a serious earthquake occurring in this district at this time, and the effects described,—loosening doors from their jambs and staples from the walls,—are quite such as might be caused by earthquake. The anxiety of the jailor was aroused by the certainty that his own life would be forfeited if any of his prisoners had escaped. No allowance would be made for the extraordinary cause of such escape. Suicide was the Roman's way of escaping from what he esteemed to be disgrace. St. Paul's words, "We are all here," exactly met the occasion, and removed the man's fears. Then came a tumult of emotions. The man seemed to feel that God was there, and these men were his servants. In a sudden impulse he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" St. Paul sets before him Jesus, and says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." What is this faith that saves? We observe that our Lord always asked for it, or expected to find it, or reproached men for the lack of it. To the blind man he said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" To the Syro-phenician woman he said, "O woman, great is thy faith." Of the centurion he said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Of the men who let the sufferer down through the roofing, it is said, "When Jesus saw their faith." Of the people at Capernaum the sad remark is made, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." And the apostles also required faith. "All that believed . . . had all things common." "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." "Faith cometh by hearing." "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." "The just shall live by faith." "Perceiving that he had faith to be healed." Faith is seldom won by mere descriptions of what faith is. Such descriptions too often only hinder and bewilder. Faith is most surely won by setting forth the great Object of faith, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, and able to save unto the uttermost. From the text we note two points.

**I. THE FAITH THAT SAVES IS FAITH IN A PERSON.** Illustrate from the appeal at Pentecost. "That same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ" (ch. ii. 36). The application of the sermon connected with the healing of the lame man is, "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you" (ch. iii. 26). Philip drew near to the eunuch, and "preached unto him Jesus." Peter said to the sick Æneas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." To Paul of Tarsus the Person Jesus appeared and spoke. At Athens Paul declared that God would judge the world by one Man whom he had appointed. The object of saving faith is (1) not any scheme of doctrine; (2) not any historical record; (3) not any finished work, conceived as distinct from a living person with a present power. A salvation that was a mental apprehension of a form of truth could not suit everybody. Trust in a person is possible to everybody. So Christ's own way of salvation is this: "He that hath the Son of God

hath life." And the apostles' way is: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But it may be urged that we must know something about Jesus if we are to trust him. It may be answered that the essentials of a saving knowledge are very few and very simple. They are these: Jesus was the promised Messiah; Jesus lived a life of innocence and self-denial; Jesus died on the cross, a sacrifice for sin; Jesus rose from the grave that he might have power to redeem; and Jesus lives, able to save us now. It is *Christ himself* lifted up who draws all men unto him.

II. THE FAITH THAT SAVES IS FAITH WITH THE HEART. Minds believe doctrines, hearts trust persons. It is necessary to distinguish carefully between faith in a thing and faith in a person. We believe things on reasons which can be submitted to the intellect. We believe persons because we feel their goodness, their character. Illustrate by the trust of a child in a father; of a patient in his physician; of a wife in her husband. It is that kind of faith or trust which the Lord Jesus seeks to win as the condition in us to which he may respond with his saving grace. If we "know him" well, we shall find in him just the goodness which will make our faith in him easy. Do you say, "Is the Lord Jesus really one whom I may fully trust"? See him taking the children in his arms. See him speaking so tenderly to the woman who was bathing his feet with her tears. See him talking to Mary in the Bethany home, whose "eyes were homes of silent prayer." See him standing up on the great day of the feast, and yearning over the multitude, and calling them to come to him, and drink, and live for ever. See him on his very cross praying for his murderers. Surely we can trust him. Our hearts respond to such goodness. He is worthy of our love. Appeal that Jesus is really God manifest, God revealing himself to your soul. He would win your love. What will your response to him be?—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XVII.

**Ver. 1.**—Amphipolis. This was the ancient capital of that division of Macedonia (Macedonia Prima); see ch. xvi. 12, note. It was situated on the Via Egnatia, thirty-four miles south-west from Philippi, and three miles from the Ægean Sea. It lay in a peninsula, surrounded on three sides by the Strymon, whence its name, *Amphipolis*; its modern name is *Neokhoria*, now a village. Its original name was 'Εννέα 'Οδοί, The Nine Ways. Originally a Thracian city, it was conquered by the Athenians, then by the Lacedæmonians, then fell under the dominion of Philip of Macedon, and finally, with the rest of Macedonia, became part of the Roman empire. Apollonia; now probably *Polina*, thirty miles due west of Amphipolis, on the Via Egnatia. The modern track from Amphipolis to Thessalonica does not pass through Polina, but beneath it. Thessalonica; on the Via Egnatia, now the important seaport of *Saloniki*, on the Ægean Sea or Archipelago, thirty-eight miles from Apollonia, and containing about sixty thousand inhabitants. Its ancient name was *Therma* (whence the *Thermean Bay*), but it took the name of Thessalonica under the Macedonian kings. It continued to grow in importance under the Romans, and was the most populous city of the whole of Macedonia. It was the capital of Macedonia Secunda under the

division by Æmilius Paulus (ch. xvi. 12, note), and in the time of Theodosius the Younger, when Macedonia consisted of two provinces, it was the capital of Macedonia Prima. But from its situation and great commercial importance it was virtually the capital of "Greece, Macedonia, and Illyricum" (Howson, in 'Dict. of Geog.'). Its trade attracted a great colony of Jews from before the time of St. Paul, and through the Roman and Greek and Turkish empires, down to the present day, when "one-half of the population is said to be of Israelitish race" (Lewin).<sup>1</sup> Thessalonica had a terrible celebrity from the massacre of its inhabitants by order of the Emperor Theodosius, in revenge for the murder of Botheric, his general, which led to the famous penance imposed upon the emperor by St. Ambrose (Gibbon, 'Decline and Fall,' ch. xxvii.). It was also taken three times in the Middle Ages: by the Saracens, with fearful slaughter, A.D. 904; by the Normans, with scarcely less cruelty, A.D. 1185; and by the Turks, in 1430. Its ecclesiastical history under its archbishops is also of great interest (see 'Dict. of Greek and Roman Geog.'). Where was a synagogue. It is needless to point out the exact agreement of this brief

<sup>1</sup> The numbers are variously given as twenty thousand, thirty thousand, and thirty-five thousand (Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. p. 318).



statement with historical fact as pointed out above. There is said to have been twenty-two Jewish synagogues at Thessalonica after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in the fifteenth century, and the number at the present time is stated to be thirty-six. The existence of a synagogue at this time was the reason of St. Paul's visit and sojourn there.

Ver. 2.—*Custom for manner, A.V.; for three for three, A.V.; from for out of, A.V.* Reasoned (see note on ver. 17).

Ver. 3.—*It behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise for Christ must needs have suffered, and risen, A.V.; whom, said he for whom, A.V.; proclaim for preach, A.V.; the Christ for Christ, A.V.* The line of reasoning adopted by St. Paul in his preaching to the Thessalonian Jews was the same as that of our Lord to the disciples and apostles on the day of his resurrection, as recorded in Luke xxiv. 26, 27; 44—47, and that of St. Peter (ch. ii. 22—36; iii. 18; iv. 11, etc.), and it is irresistible. The fulfilment of prophecies relating to the Messiah in the person of Jesus is like the fitting of a key to the intricate wards of the lock, which proves that it is the right key. The preacher of the gospel should carefully study and expound to the people the word of prophecy, and then show its counterpart in the sufferings and glory of Christ. This did St. Paul. Opening (διανοίγων); as our Lord had done (δήνοικεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς, Luke xxiv. 32), the hidden meaning of the prophecies, and then alleging (παραιθέμενος), setting before them the propositions which had thus been established. The process is described in Luke xxiv. 27 as *interpreting* ("expounded," A.V.). In this verse the *opening* was showing from the prophets that the Messiah was to die and rise again; the *alleging* was that Jesus was that very Christ.

Ver. 4.—*Were persuaded for believed, A.V. (ἐπέστησαν).* Consorted with; προσεκλήρωθησαν, a word only found here in the New Testament, but, like so many other words in St. Luke's vocabulary, found also in Plutarch, in the sense of being "associated with," or "attached to" any one; literally, *to be assigned to any one by lot* (comp. the use of the simple verb ἐκληρώθημεν, Eph. i. 11). Of the devout Greeks. Observe the frequent proofs of the influence the synagogues had in bringing heathen to the knowledge of the true God (see ver. 12; ch. x. 2; xi. 21; xiii. 48; xiv. 1, etc.). The chief women (τῶν πρώτων). So in ch. xiii. 50 τοὺς πρώτους τῆς πόλεως means "the chief men of the city." And Luke xix. 49, οἱ πρώτοι τοῦ λαοῦ are "the chief of the people" ("the principal men," R.V.). It has been already remarked that St. Luke especially notices the instances of female piety

In ver. 12 we have τῶν εὐσχημόνων in the same sense as the τῶν πρώτων in this verse.

Ver. 5.—*Jews for Jews which believed not, A.V. and T.R.; being moved for moved, A.V.; jealousy for envy, A.V. (see ch. xiii. 45, note); vile fellows of the rabble for lewd fellows of the baser sort, A.V.; gathering a crowd, set for gathered a company and set, A.V.; the city for all the city, A.V.; assaulting . . . they for assaulted . . . and, A.V.; forth for out, A.V.* The house of Jason; where it appears from ver. 7, as well as from this verse, Paul and Silas were lodging. If, as is very probable, the Jason here mentioned is the same person as the Jason of Rom. xvi. 21, it would seem that he joined the apostle, either at this time or on his visit to Macedonia mentioned in ch. xx. 3, and went with him to Corinth, where the Epistle to the Romans was written. He was a relation, συγγενής, of St. Paul's, and doubtless a Jew. Jason was a Romanized form of the name Jesus, or Joshua, as we see in the case of the high priest, the brother of Onias (Josephus, 'Ant. Jud.,' xii. v. 1). It was borne also by Jason of Cyrene, the Jewish historian (2 Mace. ii. 23), and by another mentioned in 1 Mace. viii. 17, etc. St. Luke seems to introduce Jason as a well-known person.

Ver. 6.—*Dragged for drew, A.V.; before for unto, A.V.* Certain brethren; some of the Thessalonian Christians who happened to be in the house of Jason. The rulers of the city (τοὺς πολιτάρχας, and ver. 8). This is a remarkable instance of St. Luke's accuracy. The word is unknown in Greek literature. But an inscription on an ancient marble arch, still standing in Thessalonica, or Saloniki, records that Thessalonica was governed by seven politarchs (see the inscription in Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. p. 360). Thessalonica was a Greek city, governed by its own laws. Hence the mention of the δῆμος in ver. 5. The politarchs also were Greek, not Roman, magistrates. Crying; βοῶντες, often followed by μεγάλη φωνή (ch. viii. 7; Mark xv. 34, etc.), but whether so followed or not, always meaning "a loud cry" or "shout" (ch. xxi. 34; Luke iii. 4, etc.). Turned the world upside down; ἀναστατών is used in the New Testament only by St. Luke and St. Paul (ch. xxi. 38; Gal. v. 12); to *unsettle* or *disturb*; i.e. to make people literally ἀναστάτους, homeless, outcasts, from their former settlements, or, metaphorically, unsettled in their allegiance to their civil or spiritual rulers, is the meaning of the word. In the mouth of St. Paul's accusers it contains a distinct charge of sedition and disobedience to the Roman law. The world (τὴν οἰκουμένην); the Roman empire (Luke ii. 1), viewed

as coextensive with the habitable globe (see ver. 31; ch. xix. 20; xi. 28, note).

Ver. 7.—*Act for do*, A.V. Received; i.e. as the word ὑποδέχομαι always means “received as a guest” (Luke x. 38; xix. 6; Jas. ii. 25, etc.). Hence the substantive ὑποδοχή, an entertainment or reception. The insinuation is that, by harbouring these seditious men, Jason had made himself a partner in their sedition. That there is another king, etc. (comp. John xix. 12, 15).

Ver. 8.—*Multitude for people*, A.V. (τὸν ὄχλον, not δῆμον).

Ver. 9.—*From for of*, A.V.; *the rest for of the other*, A.V. The rest, or others, are of course the “certain brethren” of ver. 6.

Ver. 10.—*Berea for Berea*, A.V.; *when they were come for coming*, A.V. Berea. In the third division of Macedonia, about sixty miles from Thessalonica; its modern name is Verria. Went into the synagogue. No amount of ill usage from the Jews could weaken St. Paul’s love for “his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. ix. 3); and no amount of danger or suffering could check his zeal in preaching the gospel of Christ.

Ver. 11.—*Now these for these*, A.V.; *examining for and searched*, A.V.; *these for those*, A.V. Note the immense advantage which the preachers and the hearers had in the previous knowledge of the Scriptures gained by the Bereans in the synagogue. Note also the mutual light shed by the Old and New Testaments the one upon the other.

Ver. 12.—*Many . . . therefore for therefore many*, A.V.; *the Greek women of honourable estate for honourable women which were Greeks*, A.V. Honourable; εὐσημόνων, as ch. xiii. 50, where it is coupled with τοὺς πρώτους τῆς πόλεως (see ver. 4; comp. Mark xv. 43). Meyer thinks that it is meant that the men were Greeks too; but this is uncertain. The only Berean convert whose name we know is Sopater (ch. xx. 4), or Sosipater, who is probably the same (Rom. xvi. 21). If so, he was apparently a Jew, whose Hebrew name may have been Abishua.

Ver. 13.—*Proclaimed for preached*, A.V.; *Berea also for Berea*, A.V.; *likewise for also*, A.V.; *stirring up and troubling the multitudes for and stirred up the people*, A.V. and T.R.

Ver. 14.—*Forth for away*, A.V.; *as far as for as it were* (ὥς for ὡς), A.V. and T.R.; *and for but*, A.V. and T.R.; *Timothy for Timotheus*, A.V. As far as to the sea. If the reading of the T.R. is right, ὡς merely indicates the direction. Literally, ὡς ἐν, κ.τ.λ., means “with the thought of going to the sea,” but thence, by a common usage, it describes the action without reference to the thought. The English phrase, “they made for the sea,” is nearly

equivalent. The object of going to the sea, seventeen miles from Berea, was to take ship for Athens. This he probably did either at Pydna or at Dium. Silas and Timothy. Whether Timothy left Philippi with St. Paul, or whether, as is not improbable, he joined him at Thessalonica, cannot be decided. Anyhow, Paul now left Silas and Timothy to watch over the Thessalonian converts.

Ver. 15.—*But for and*, A.V.; *as far as for unto* (ἕως), A.V.; *Timothy for Timotheus*, A.V.; *that they should come for for to come*, A.V. They that conducted, etc. (οἱ καθίσταντες). The verb καθίστημι, in its primary sense, means to “place any one” in a given spot; and thence secondarily, to “conduct” or “escort” any one to a place, to “set him down” at such a place. So Homer (*Odyssey*, xiii. 294) uses the word of transporting any one by ship to this or that town (quoted by Meyer). There is no indication in the word of St. Paul’s defect of sight or infirmity. Receiving a commandment, etc. We learn here that St. Paul sent a message to Silas and Timothy to join him at Athens as quickly as possible, and at ver. 16 that he waited at Athens for them. From 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2, we learn that he sent Timothy from Athens back to Thessalonica; and from 1 Thess. iii. 6 we learn that Timothy came to St. Paul at Corinth (where the Epistle to the Thessalonians was written) from Thessalonica. We also learn from 1 Thess. i. 1 that Silas and Timothy were both with him at Corinth when he wrote the Epistle, and from ch. xviii. 5 that they had both come to Corinth from Macedonia, some weeks after Paul himself had been at Corinth (ch. xviii. 4, 5). All these statements harmonize perfectly (as Paley has shown) on the supposition that Silas and Timothy did join St. Paul at Athens; that for the reasons given in 1 Thess. iii., when he was unable to return to Thessalonica himself, as he much wished, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica, and Silas probably to Berea; and that Silas and Timothy came together from Macedonia to Corinth, where St. Paul had gone alone; where it may be noted, as another undesigned coincidence, that whereas the First Epistle to the Thessalonians implies that Silas did not go to Thessalonica (1 Thess. iii. 2), ch. xviii. 5 does not say that Silas and Timothy came from Thessalonica, but from Macedonia. The inaccuracy supposed by Meyer (on this verse) is purely imaginary. Ch. xviii. 5 does not say that Silas and Timothy “only joined Paul at Corinth,” but merely relates some change in St. Paul’s procedure consequent upon their joining him at Corinth. Alford (on this verse), in saying that Paul sent Timothy from Berea, not from Athens, is guided by his own idea

of what is probable, not by the letter of the narrative (see further note on ch. xviii. 5).

Ver. 16.—*Provoked within for stirred in*, A.V. (παρωξύνετο; see ch. xv. 29, note); *as he beheld for when he saw*, A.V.; *full of idols for wholly given to idolatry*, A.V. The Greek κατείδωλος occurs only here, either in the New Testament or elsewhere. But the analogy of other words similarly compounded fixes the meaning "full of idols"—a description fully borne out by Pausanias and Xenophon and others (Steph., 'Thesaur.:' Meyer, etc.).

Ver. 17.—*So he reasoned for therefore disputed he*, A.V.; *and the devout for and with the devout*, A.V.; *market-place every day for market daily*, A.V. Reasoned (διελέγετο, as in ver. 2; ch. xviii. 19 and xxiv. 12). "Disputed" gives the force of διαλέγεσθαι better than "reasoned," because the word in Plato, Thucydides, Xenophon, Ælian, etc., is especially used of discussions and arguments in which two persons or more take part. Διάλεκτος is "discussion;" ἡ διαλεκτική is the art of drawing answers from your opponent to prove your conclusion; διάλογος is a "dialogue" (see, however, ch. xx. 7). The market-place. "The celebrated Ἀγορά, . . . not far from the Pnyx, the Acropolis, and the Areopagus, . . . rich in noble statues, the central seat of commercial, forensic, and philosophic intercourse, as well as of the busy idleness of the loungers" (Meyer, *in loc.*).

Ver. 18.—*And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers for then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks*, A.V.; *would for will*, A.V.; *preached for preached unto them*, A.V. and T.R. The Epicureans (so called from Epicurus, their founder) and the Stoics (so called from the στωά, the colonnade or piazza where Zeno their founder taught) were the most numerous sects at Athens at this time; and their respective tenets were the most opposite to the doctrines of the gospel. Encountered him; σύνεβαλλον. In ch. iv. 15 it is followed by πρός, and is properly rendered "conferred;" here it is followed by the dative, and may be understood to mean "disputed" (συμβάλλειν λόγους). It may, however, not less properly be taken in the sense of a hostile encounter of words, as Luke xiv. 31, and frequently in classical Greek. This babbler (σπερμολόγος); literally, a *picker-up of seeds*, applied to a crow (Aristoph., 'Aves,' 232, 579). Plutarch too ('Demet.,' 28) has σπερμολόγοι ὄρνιθες, birds picking up seeds. Hence it is used of idle hangers-on in the markets, who get a livelihood by what they can pick up, and so generally of empty, worthless fellows. Hence it is further applied to those who pick up scraps of knowledge from one or

another and "babble them indifferently in all companies" (Johnson's 'Dictionary,' under "Babble"). A setter forth of strange gods. There does not seem to be the least ground for Chrysostom's suggestion that they took Anastasis (the Resurrection) for the name of a goddess. But the preaching of Jesus the Son of God, himself risen from the dead (ver. 31), and hereafter to be the Judge of quick and dead at the general resurrection, was naturally, to both Stoics and Epicureans, a setting forth of strange gods. Ξένα δαιμόνια are "foreign deities," or "dæmons," inferior gods. The word καταγγελεῖς, a setter forth, does not occur elsewhere. But the nearly identical word κατάγγελος is used by Plutarch.

Ver. 19.—*Took hold of for took*, A.V.; *the Areopagus for Areopagus*, A.V.; *teaching is for doctrine* . . . is, A.V.; *which is spoken by thee for whereof thou speakest*, A.V. Took hold of him. The word ἐπιλάβεσθαι means simply to "take hold of" the hand, the hair, a garment, etc. The context alone decides whether this *taking hold* is friendly or hostile (for the former sense, see Matt. xiv. 31; Mark viii. 23; Luke ix. 47; xiv. 4; ch. ix. 27; xxiii. 19, etc.; for the latter, Luke xxiii. 26; ch. xvi. 19; xviii. 17; xxi. 30, 33). Here the sense is well expressed by Grotius (quoted by Meyer): "Taking him gently by the hand." The Areopagus. Mars' Hill, close to the Agora ("the market") on the north, was so called from the legend that Mars was tried there before the gods for the murder of a son of Neptune. It is (says Lewin) a bare, rugged rock, approached at the south-eastern corner by steps, of which sixteen still remain perfect. Its area at the top measures sixty paces by twenty-four, within which a quadrangle, sixteen paces square, is excavated and levelled for the court. The judges seem to have sat on benches tier above tier on the rising rock on the north side of the quadrangle. There were also seats on the east and west sides, and on the south on either side of the stairs. The Areopagus (the upper court) was the most august of all the courts at Athens. Socrates was tried and condemned before it for impiety. On the present occasion, there is no appearance of judicial proceedings, but they seem to have adjourned to the Areopagus from the Agora, as to a convenient place for quiet discussion.

Ver. 20.—*Strange things*. Ξενίζειν, in this use of it, means to act or play the foreigner, to imitate the manners and language and appearance of a foreigner (ξένος), just as Ἰουδαΐζειν, Ἑλληνίζειν, Ἀττικίζειν, etc., mean to Judaize, Hellenize, Atticize, etc. Here, then, the Athenians say that St. Paul's doctrines have a foreign air, do not look like native Athenian speculations,



Ver. 21.—*Now for for, A.V.; the strangers sojourning there for strangers which were there, A.V.* Spent their time. This gives the general sense, but the margin of the R.T., *had leisure for nothing else*, is much more accurate. *Εὐκαιρεῖν*, which is not considered good Greek, is only used by Polybius, and in the sense either of “being wealthy” or of “having leisure” or “opportunity.” In the New Testament it occurs in Mark vi. 31 and 1 Cor. xvi. 12. Some new thing. So Cleon (Thucyd., iii. 38) rates the Athenians upon their being entirely guided by words, and constantly deceived by any novelty of speech (*καινότητος λόγου*). And Demosthenes in his first ‘Philippic’ (p. 43, 7), inveighs against them because, when they ought to be up and doing, they went about the Agora, asking one another, “Is there any news? (*Αέγεται τι καινόν;*)” The comparative *καινότερον* is a little stronger than *καινόν*: “the very last news” (Alford).

Ver. 22.—*And for then, A.V.; the Areopagus for Mars’ hill, A.V.; in all things I perceive that for I perceive that in all things, A.V.; somewhat for too, A.V.* In the midst is simply a local description. He stood in the midst of the excavated quadrangle, while his hearers probably sat on the seats all round. Yemen of Athens. The Demosthenes of the Church uses the identical address—*Ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι*—which the great orator used in his stirring political speeches to the Athenian people. Somewhat superstitious. There is a difference of opinion among commentators whether these words imply praise or blame. Chrysostom, followed by many others, takes it as said in the way of encomium, and understands the word *δαιοδαιμονεστέρους* as equivalent to *εὐλαβεστέρους*, very religious, more than commonly religious. And so Bishop Jacobson (‘Speaker’s Commentary’), who observes that the substantive *δαιοδαιμονία* is used five times by Josephus, and always in the sense of “religion,” or “piety.” On the other hand, the Vulgate (*superstitiosiores*), the English Versions, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, etc., take the word in its most common classical sense of “superstitious;” and it weighs for something towards determining St. Luke’s use of the word that Plutarch uses *δαιοδαιμονία* always in a bad sense, of superstition, as in his life of Alexander and elsewhere, and in his tract ‘De Superstitione’ (*Δαιοδαιμονία*). Perhaps the conclusion is that St. Paul, having his spirit stirred by seeing the city full of idols, determined to attack that spirit in the Athenian people which led to so much idolatry; which he did in the speech which follows. But, acting with his usual wisdom, he used an inoffensive term at the outset of his speech. He could not mean to praise

them for that *δαιοδαιμονία* which it was the whole object of his sermon to condemn. Josephus (‘Contr. Apion,’ i. 12) calls the Athenians *τοῖς εὐσεβεστάτους τῶν Ἑλλήνων*, the most religious of all Greeks (Howson).

Ver. 23.—*Passed along for passed by, A.V.; observed the objects of your worship for beheld your devotions, A.V.* (*τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν*: see 2 Thess. ii. 4); *also an altar for an altar, A.V.; an for the, A.V.; what for whom, A.V. and T.R.; worship in ignorance for ignorantly worship, A.V.; this for him, A.V. and T.R.; set forth for declare, A.V.* **AN UNKNOWN GOD.** There is no direct and explicit testimony in ancient writers to the existence of any one such altar at Athens, but Pausanias and others speak of altars to “unknown gods,” as to be seen in Athens, which may well be understood of several such altars, each dedicated to an unknown god. One of these was seen by St. Paul, and, with inimitable tact, made the text of his sermon. He was not preaching a foreign god to them, but making known to them one whom they had already included in their devotions without knowing him.

Ver. 24.—*The God for God, A.V.* (surely a change for the worse); *he being Lord for seeing that he is Lord, A.V.* Made with hands (*χειροποίητοις*); see the same phrase in Mark xiv. 5, 8; ch. vii. 48; Heb. ix. 11. St. Paul applies it, too, to the circumcision made with the knife, as distinguishing from that wrought by the Holy Spirit (Eph. iii. 11). It is frequent in the LXX. It is a striking instance of St. Paul’s unflinching boldness and fidelity to the truth, that he should expose the hollowness of heathen worship, standing within a stone’s throw of the Parthenon and the temple of Theseus and the countless other temples of gods and goddesses, which were the pride and glory of the Athenian people. Note how he begins his catechetical instruction to the Athenians with the first article of the Creed: “I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”

Ver. 25.—*Is he served by for is worshipped with, A.V.; he himself for he, A.V.* Served by men’s hands. *Θεραπεύεται*, is “waited upon,” as a man is waited upon by his servant, who ministers to his wants; *θεράπων* and *θεραπευτής* are “an attendant.” So in Hebrew: *עָבַד*, to serve God; *עָבַד*, a servant of God; *עֲבָדָה* service as of the Levites in the temple, etc. Anything; or as some take it, as if he needed anybody’s help or service. The argument, as Chrysostom suggests, is similar to that in Ps. l. 8—12.

Ver. 26.—*He made for hath made, A.V.; of one for of one blood, A.V. and T.R.; every nation for all nations, A.V.; having deter-*

*mined their appointed seasons for and hath determined the times before appointed, A.V.* From the unity of God Paul deduces the unity of the human race, all created by God, all sprung from one ancestor, or one blood (whichever reading we take), and so not to have their several national gods, but all to be united in the worship of the one true and living God, the Father of them all. It may be remarked by the way that the languages of the earth, differing like the skins and the features of the different races, and corresponding to those various bounds assigned by God to their habitations, yet bear distinct and emphatic testimony to this unity. They are variations, more or less extended, of the speech of man. Bounds of their habitation; τὰς ὁροθεσίας, κ.τ.λ.: the word only occurs here; elsewhere, though rarely, τὰ ὁροθέσια.

Ver. 27.—*God for the Lord, A.V. and T.R. (Meyer does not accept this reading); is for be, A.V.; each for every, A.V.* If haply they might feel after him. Ψηλαφᾶω is "to touch, feel, or handle," as Luke xxiv. 39; Heb. xii. 18; 1 John i. 1. But it is especially used of the action of the blind groping or feeling their way by their hands in default of sight. So Homer describes Polyphemus as χερσὶ ψηλαφᾶω, feeling his way to the mouth of the cave with his hands after he was blinded by Ulysses ('Odyssey,' ix. 416). And in the LXX. of Deut. xxviii. 29 we read, Ἐσὶν ψηλαφῶν μεσημβρίας ὡς εἰ τις ψηλαφήσῃ τυφλὸς ἐν τῷ σκότει, "Thou shalt grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness." The teaching, therefore, of the passage is that, though God was very near to every man, and had not left himself without abundant witness in his manifold gifts, yet, through the blindness of the heathen, they had to feel their way uncertainly toward God. In this fact lies the need of a revelation, as it follows ver. 30, etc. And hence part at least of the significance of such passages as, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8); "Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9); "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6), and many more like passages.

Ver. 28.—*Even for also, A.V.* For in him, etc. This is the proof that we have not far to go to find God. Our very life and being, every movement we make as living persons, is a proof that God is near, nay, more than near, that he is with us and round about us, quickening us with his own life, upholding us by his own power, sustaining the being that we derive from him (comp. Ps. cxxxix. 7, etc.; xxiii. 4).

Certain even of your own poets; viz. Aratus of Tarsus (270 B.C.), who has the exact words quoted by St. Paul, and Cleanthes of Assos (300 B.C.), who has Ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένεος ἐσμέν. As he had just defended himself from the imputation of introducing foreign gods by referring to an Athenian altar, so now, for the same purpose, he quotes one of their own Greek poets. (For the statement that man is the offspring of God, comp. Luke iii. 38.)

Ver. 29.—*Being then for forasmuch then as we are, A.V.; device of man for man's device, A.V.* Graven by art, etc. In the Greek the substantive χαράγματα, graven images, things engraven, is in apposition with the gold, silver, and stone, and a further description of them. Art, τέχνη, is the manual skill, the device; ἐνθύμησις is the genius and mental power which plans the splendid temple, or exquisite sculpture, or the statue which is to receive the adoration of the idolater. Compare the withering sarcasm of Isaiah (xliv. 9—17).

Ver. 30.—*The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked for and the times of this ignorance God winked at, A.V.; he commandeth for commandeth, A.V.; men for all men, A.V.; that they should all everywhere repent for everywhere to repent, A.V. and T.R.* The times of ignorance; perhaps with reference to ver. 23, and also implying that all the idolatry, of which he had spoken in ver. 29, arose from ignorance. God overlooked; or, as it is idiomatically expressed in the A.V., *winked at*; made as if he did not see it; "kept silence," as it is said in Ps. l. 21; made no move to punish it. That they should all everywhere. The gospel is for the whole world: "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. x. 18); "Preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). Repent. The key-note of the gospel (Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17; ch. xx. 21).

Ver. 31.—*Inasmuch as for because, A.V. and T.R.; the man for that man, A.V.* He hath appointed a day. Hitherto the Athenians seem to have listened with interest while St. Paul was, with consummate skill, leading them onwards from the doctrines of natural religion, and while he was laying down speculative truths. But now they are brought to a stand. They might no longer go on asking, Τί καινόν; A day fixed by God, they were told, was at hand, in which God would judge the world in righteousness, and in which they themselves would be judged also. And the certainty of this was made apparent by the fact that he who was ordained to be Judge was raised from the dead, and so ready to commence the judgment. The time for immediate action was come; God's revelation had

reached them. The man (*ἄνθρωπος*). So ch. ii. 22, *Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀποδεδειγμένον*, κ.τ.λ. And so in John v. 27 our Lord himself says of himself that the Father gave him authority to execute judgment "because he is the Son of man;" and in Matt. xxvi. 24, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power." (For the connection of the judgment with Christ's resurrection, see especially ch. x. 40—42.) So too the Creeds.

Ver. 32.—*Now for and, A.V.; but for and, A.V.; concerning this yet again for again of this matter, A.V.* Some mocked. Athenian scepticism could not accept so spiritual a truth as the resurrection of the dead; and Athenian levity of purpose deferred to another day the decisive step of accepting the salvation of the risen Saviour, just as it had deferred resistance to Philip of Macedon till their liberties were gone and their country enslaved. (For "We will hear thee again," comp. ch. xxiv. 25.)

Ver. 33.—*Thus for so, A.V. and T.R.; went out for departed, A.V.* The meaning is that he left the assembly in the Areopagus. At ver. 22 we were told that he stood *ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου πύργου* (where see note); now he went out *ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν*, leaving them still sitting on their benches, while he walked down the steps to the city again from the place where he stood.

Ver. 34.—*But for houbett, A.V.; whom also for the which, A.V.* Dionysius the Areopagite. The earliest notice we have of

him in ecclesiastical writers is the well-known one of Eusebius, 'Ecc. Hist.' iii. iv., in which he says, "We are told by an ancient writer, Dionysius the pastor of the diocese of Corinth (ob. 178 A.D.), that his namesake Dionysius the Areopagite, of whom St. Luke says in the Acts that he was the first who embraced the faith after St. Paul's discourse in the Areopagus, became the first bishop of the Church in Athens." Eusebius repeats the statement in his long notice of Dionysius of Corinth, in iv. xxiii. Other uncertain traditions speak of him (Suidas) as one who rose to the height of Greek erudition, and as having suffered a cruel martyrdom (Niceph., iii. 11). "The works which go by his name are undoubtedly spurious" (Alford). Damaris; "wholly unknown" (Meyer), but certainly not the wife of Dionysius, as Chrysostom ('De Sacerd.' iv. 7) and others have thought ('Dictionary of the Bible'). And others with them. These would seem to be but few from St. Luke's way of mentioning them, and from our hearing nothing more in the Acts about the Church at Athens. It is remarkable that this small number of converts coincides with the weakness of the synagogue at Athens—too weak to persecute, and too weak to make proselytes among the Greeks of Athens. It seems clear that nowhere else had St. Paul won so few souls to Christ. And yet God's Word did not return to him wholly void. The seed fell on some good ground, to bring forth fruit unto eternal life.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—15.—*The strange alliance.* Among the hindrances to the progress of the gospel in the world we have often to notice the combination of the most discordant elements for the purpose of obstruction. Pilate and Herod were made friends together when they united in crucifying the Lord of glory. When the chief priests and Pharisees, in their blind hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ, sought his death, they did not scruple to invoke the aid of the Roman power, the object of their bitterest hatred and continual resistance, and to profess an entire devotion to that detested rule. "We have no king but Cæsar." So in politics, men of the most opposite principles often combine to crush the object of their common dislike. In religion, too, we see extreme parties joining hands to discomfit a third party to which they are equally opposed. In all such combinations there is want of uprightness and truth. There is a culpable indifference to the nature of the weapons which men use to compass their own end. There is a clear evidence that it is not the cause of righteousness and of God's truth that men are seeking to promote, but some end of their own. When these combinations take place to oppose the progress of Christian truth, though they may be formidable for a time, they carry with them the evidences that they are from beneath and will not prevail. The Church of God need not be afraid of them. The Jews of Thessalonica combined with the heathen rabble of their town, under a pretence of loyalty to Cæsar, to silence Paul and Silas. When they fled they pursued them to Berea, and drove them thence onwards to Athens and Corinth. But the breath intended to extinguish the flame did but make it blaze up from place to place. So will it be with every conspiracy to put out the light of Christ. Philosophy and sensuality, science and



lawlessness, atheism and superstition, may join hands and combine to remove the candlestick of God's Church; it will but shed its light brighter and wider in the places where God wills it to shine, until at last the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God's glory, as the waters cover the sea.

Vers. 16—34.—*The cross of Christ in the metropolis of art and philosophy.* There is a singular interest in this first encounter of the gospel with the art and philosophy of Athens, and it is instructive to note the attitude taken by the great preacher in the encounter. Whether St. Paul had artistic taste we have no means of knowing. But probably, as a devout Jew, seeing that sculpture was so largely employed in the images of the gods and the deified emperors, his eye would not have been trained to look with pleasure even upon the master-pieces of Grecian art. In like manner Greek architecture was mainly devoted to glorify the temples of the gods. The Parthenon at Athens, the temple of Diana at Ephesus, the temples of Apollo and Diana at Antioch, at Baalbec, in the many cities of Asia adorned by the Seleucidæ, were indeed materially beautiful, but that material beauty was eclipsed by the moral deformity of their consecration to idolatry, to imposture, and to falsehood. The devout eye of the apostle would therefore be more shocked by the dishonour done to God, and the injury to the moral nature of man, than gratified by mere beauty of form, or architectural grandeur and grace. Hence, as far as we learn from the inspired narrative, the dominant effect upon his mind of the sight of the unrivalled statues and temples of Athens was grief and indignation at their homage to idolatry, rather than admiration of the artistic genius which produced them. In like manner he found himself face to face with philosophy. He was treading the courts of the academy where Plato had taught; he was in the city where Socrates had lived and died; there Aristotle had both learnt and taught; there the successors both of Zeno and Epicurus were still inculcating the tenets of their respective schools. What was to be the attitude of an evangelist in the presence of these august representatives of human intellect? In what language was the apostle of Jesus Christ to address himself to them? In that of apology? In that of compromise? in that of conscious inferiority? or as if the possessors of so much wisdom had nothing to learn from him? Or, on the other hand, was he to speak the language of scorn and indignation—was he to shut his eyes to all that might be true and noble in the sentiments of those men, and to put them on a level with the vilest of mankind, because they were ignorant of the great truths of revelation? The actual conduct of St. Paul was as modest as it was wise, and as dauntless as it was modest. Looking around him at the altars of the gods, he seized upon the one favourable aspect of them—their witness to a worshipful spirit in the people towards the Unseen. Gathering from Greek literature a true description of the relation of man to the living God, he proceeded with wonderful simplicity and force to enunciate those truths of natural religion which an untainted reason perceives and approves. And then, rising to those higher truths which are the domain of revelation, he preached, as he had done before in the Agora, Jesus and the resurrection. He bid them repent of their sins done in ignorance; he told them of the coming of the day of judgment; he spoke to them of the awful Judge, and of his unerring righteousness. There was no faltering in his speech, no watering down of the severity of the gospel, no wincing at the subtle wits or the pretentious wisdom of those who heard him. He spoke as a man who knew that he had the truth of God, and that that truth would prevail. And such should ever be the attitude of the Christian teacher before the powers of the world. Humble, charitable, confident, and firm; owning all that is good and beautiful and true in the world around him, but always feeling, and acting as if he felt, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is better and truer and more beautiful than all; valuing true wisdom, and prizing the great gift of reason as the brightest jewel of our human nature; yet always remembering that in our fallen state reason could bring no remedy for sin nor cast a light upon the world to come; but that the only Name whereby we may be saved is the Name of Jesus, and that he alone has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—9.**—*A fulfilled and an unfulfilled prophecy.* These verses would supply us with other material for thought. They present to us: 1. Christian workers patiently and conscientiously proceeding with their mission (vers. 1, 2). 2. Christian advocates employing the weapon which was prepared for their use (ver. 3). 3. Christian labourers reaping a blessed spiritual harvest (ver. 4). 4. Faithful followers of the Lord partaking of his sufferings (vers. 5—9). But we rather find here—

I. A GREAT PROPHECY FULFILLED. “Alleging that Christ must needs have suffered,” etc. (ver. 3); *i.e.* must needs have so done in order that the Scriptures (ver. 2) might be fulfilled (see Luke xxiv. 26, 46). The death of the Messiah was the realization of (1) the predictions contained in the Jewish sacrifices (the sin offerings and trespass offerings, and notably the offering of the goat on the great Day of Atonement; the Passover lamb, etc.); and of (2) such predictions in word as those contained in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The Law must have remained fatally incomplete and prophecy unfulfilled if the Christ had not suffered as Jesus of Nazareth did suffer, if he had not died the death which he underwent. In the crucified Nazarene the greatest of all prophecies had been fulfilled.

II. AN UNCONSCIOUS PROPHECY TO BE FULFILLED. The language of the complainants (ver. 6) was unintentionally prophetic. They indeed stated, hyperbolically, as something already accomplished, that which the ambassadors of Christ are engaged in doing. But they indicated, truly and graphically, what the gospel of his grace is doing—*it is turning the world upside down.* We may put the facts thus to our minds: 1. When Christ came evil was everywhere uppermost. The reigning forces of the world at the time of the Incarnation were “not of the Father, but of the world.” Within the one favoured and enlightened nation were hypocrisy, superficiality, bigotry and unbrotherliness, spiritual delusion; without that circle were superstition, ignorance, atheism, vice, cruelty—all the abominations into which a corrupt heathenism had sunk. Language will not tell the enormity of the world’s condition. Nothing would be of any avail but a radical revolution, the overturning of all existing thoughts, habits, methods, institutions—turning the world upside down, bringing to the dust of humiliation everything that was on the throne of honour. 2. The gospel of Jesus Christ is destined to overturn it. (1) It has adequate means for so doing—Divine truth, the aid of the Divine Spirit, a Divine institution (the Christian Church). (2) It has the true method, a spiritual one; its weapons of warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and therefore mighty to pull down strongholds (2 Cor. x. 4). It wins by teaching, persuading, leavening, renewing, acting upon the life through the mind, the heart, the will—through the whole spiritual nature. This is the one conquering course, the one method which really and permanently subdues. (3) It has the assurance of success; both in the promise of a Divine Lord, and in the history of its own triumphs. It *is* turning the world upside down. In many districts “the idols are utterly abolished;” many “islands are waiting for his Law;” hoary systems of idolatry and iniquity are pierced through and through with the shafts of truth, and promise to fall prone as Dagon before the ark of God; the vices of civilized lands are being successfully assailed; the kingdom of error and of evil is disappearing, and the kingdom of Christ is coming. The triumphs of this last missionary century are a distinct assurance that iniquity shall be cast down and righteousness be exalted.—C.

**Vers. 10—14.**—*The duty of individual research.* This interesting and cheering episode teaches us one lesson in particular; but there are three suggestions we may gain preliminarily. 1. That the Christian pilgrim (and workman) may hope that shadow will soon be succeeded by sunshine; that the tumult of Thessalonica will soon be followed by the reverent inquiry of Berea. 2. That he must expect sunshine to pass, before long, into shadow; the fruit-gathering of Berea to yield to the flight to Athens (vers. 12—14). 3. That true nobility is in excellency of character: “These were more noble” (ver. 11). The word signifies (derivatively) those of noble birth, and it is here applied to those who had chosen the honourable course and were doing

the estimable thing. This is the true, the real nobility. That which is adventitious, dependent on birth and blood, is only circumstantial, is liable to be dishonoured by the chances and changes of time, is of no account with God. That which is based on character and born of wise choice, pure feeling, estimable action, is real, human, unalterable, of Divine origin, and enjoying the Divine approval. But the particular lesson of our text is—

**THE DUTY OF INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH.** The Bereans are commended in the sacred narrative as “more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness,” etc. (ver. 11). Their excellency was in their readiness to receive and investigate, to study and search for themselves whether the new teaching was or was not in accordance with the will of God. Whence we infer: 1. That blind opposition to all new doctrine is a sin as well as a mistake. It may be that men who propound views different from those that we have held come to us from God and offer us that which is in the Scriptures, though we have not yet discovered it there. There are more things in that living Word than the wisest man has ever seen yet. Unqualified resistance of doctrine which is different from “that which we have received to hold” may be the rejection of God’s own truth; in that case it is both injurious and wrong. 2. That it is the duty of every Christian man to test all new doctrine by the teaching of the Divine Word. We are to search the Scriptures whether these things are so or not. There is no excuse for declining to do this; for (1) God has placed his Word well within reach of us all. It is in a small compass; it is printed in our own language (no book so lends itself to translation and is so widely translated); it can be obtained for a small sum. (2) He has so formed us and so written it that it is level to our understanding; he has given us the necessary mental faculties to comprehend it, and he has made the substance of it so simple, plain, appreciable, that the wayfaring man may rejoice in it. It is not the recondite, abstruse, mystical utterance which some disclosures are. (3) He is ready to grant us his own Divine aid in mastering and applying it. For what can we ask the help of his Holy Spirit more confidently than for the study of his own Word? When is he more certain to fulfil his promise (Luke xi. 13) than when we ask for his enlightening influence as we “search the Scriptures” (John v. 39)? It is not only our *right* but our *duty* to listen to all and to try all (1 John iv. 1); to “judge for ourselves what is right” (Luke xii. 57). It is God’s plain will concerning us that we should all bring what we hear to the standard of his own revealed will in his Word. To do this effectually, we must study that Word (a) diligently, (b) intelligently, (c) devoutly.—C.

Vers. 15—17.—*A saddening spectacle: a missionary sermon.* The spirit of Paul was “stirred in him” (ver. 16) by the statues which crowded the city of Athens. That which would yield intense gratification to any modern traveller plunged the apostle into deep melancholy and gloom. But there is a vast difference between *then* and *now*. Then idolatry was regnant; now it is dethroned. Then the worship of the living God had but one representative in that populous city; now there is not one idolater to be discovered there. To Paul those statues, meeting him at every turn and almost at every step, were abominable idols; to us they are interesting relics of a distant age.

**I. THE SADNESS OF THIS SPECTACLE AS IT APPEARED TO PAUL.** The aspect which Athens wore to the apostle is expressed by the sacred historian. It was a “city wholly given to idolatry,” or filled with idols. He would have discovered on inquiry if he did not already know, that these statues were not worshipped as gods themselves by their devotees. Nevertheless, he would have called them “idols;” for they were distinctly condemned by the commandments of the Lord (Exod. xx. 4, 5); they were prohibited by the Law of God as idolatrous. Though the intelligence of Athens saved its citizens from idolatry in its last and worst stage, the *identification* of the image *with* the deity, it had not saved it from the idolatry of an earlier stage, the *association* of the image *with* the deity it represented. Against this form of sin, so severely denounced in Scripture, so offensive to God, so dangerous and delusive to man, the spirit of Paul rose in strong rebellion. The sight of its outward manifestation filled him with inexpressible sadness; his “spirit was embittered.”

**II. THE ASPECT WHICH THIS ATHENIAN STATUARY WEARS TO US.** To us it is a sad proof that the world by wisdom does not know God. Human wisdom can never hope



to go further than it went in Athens. If ever, anywhere, human philosophy, human art, the human imagination could have reached truth and found God, it would have triumphed at Athens. But there was the melancholy exhibition of error and immorality. The utmost exertion of human thought had ended in (1) the worship of many gods; (2) the worship of gods to whom lust and cruelty were ascribed; (3) the worship of these gods with debasing rites. No city in the world gives surer or sadder proof that sin so injures and disables us that our unaided manhood cannot rise to the sacred heights of truth and purity.

III. THE SAD SPECTACLE IT SUGGESTS TO US NOW. If Athens needed the ministry of Paul so terribly then, how much must all heathen cities require the gospel of Christ to-day! In the vast populations of the Asiatic and African continents, and among the hundred "islands of the sea," where human intelligence has never attempted to scale the heights which Grecian philosophers tried to reach, what awful degradations must exist and do exist! If Athens was an idol-covered city, what must be the condition of the barbarous towns and villages of an unevangelized world? What sights are there to stir our spirits now! What idolatry, what superstition, what cruelty, what lasciviousness, what falsehood, what dishonesty! what utter absence of piety, holiness, and love! what an absolute reversal of God's first thought of human nature and human life! What infinite reason to address ourselves to—

IV. THE SACRED DUTY TO WHICH IT CALLS US. "Therefore disputed he . . . daily" (ver. 17). The Christian Church must gird itself to the work of meeting pagan error with Divine truth. It is a great task to undertake. But as the lonely apostle went on, single-handed, with his mission, trusting in him "to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth," and knowing that "the foolishness of God is wiser than man," and that "the weak things of the world can confound the things which are mighty," even so must we. If only the Church went forth to this *its* work with half the zeal with which the spirit-stirred apostle wrought out *his* life-work, the time would not be counted by centuries when the idols would be utterly abolished, and the Lord Jesus Christ would alone be exalted.—C.

Ver. 18.—*Christianity and Epicureanism.* Against the doctrine of Epicurus, the truth as it is in Jesus teaches us—

I. THAT ALL THINGS PROCEED FROM THE INTELLIGENT OPERATION OF THE LIVING GOD, and are by him sustained. That all our springs are not in any "it," but "in him" (Ps. lxxxvii. 7); that "every gift cometh down from the Father of lights, in whom," etc. (Jas. i. 17); that *he* (a Divine One) made the worlds, and upholds all things, etc. (Heb. i. 2, 3; Gen. i. 1; ver. 24; etc.).

II. THAT THE HUMAN SPIRIT, AS DISTINCT FROM THE HUMAN BODY, IS THE ONE OBJECT OF INESTIMABLE VALUE.

III. THAT THE CHIEF GOOD AND FINAL END IN HUMAN LIFE IS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Not ἀραξία through φρόνησις, but right-ousness by faith and love. 1. The being counted right (or righteous) by God. 2. The possession of inward, spiritual rectitude. 3. The exhibition of integrity in word and deed. This (1) by faith in Jesus Christ, and (2) as the outgrowth of love to him.

IV. THAT THE POSSESSION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ISSUES IN PEACE AND JOY. We are not to regard a state of mental equability as the great end to be diligently and persistently attained, as the one supreme accomplishment; but to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," in the assurance that, thus seeking, we shall find a "peace which passes understanding," and a joy which cannot be taken from us.

V. THAT THERE IS AN ASSURED FUTURE FOR THE FAITHFUL, WHICH WILL REALIZE THE LARGEST HUMAN HOPE: that the mind does not perish with the body, but lives on in another world, entering a brighter realm, moving in a broader sphere, living a fuller life, in the home of God, in the abode of purity and blessedness.—C.

Ver. 18.—*Christianity and Stoicism.* While there were points in Stoicism which harmonized with the doctrine of the great Teacher, there was very much indeed in which it was wholly dissimilar and even antagonistic. The fact that it conducted so freely and frequently to suicide is a melancholy confession of its failure; something more and something other was needed to meet the wants of the soul than its

proud, self-sufficient, but insufficient egoism. Christianity differs from it in that it teaches—

I. THAT A DIVINE FATHER, AND NOT AN INEXORABLE FATE, IS THE RULING POWER IN THE UNIVERSE. It is *not* true that Deity is subject to all-conquering fate; it *is* true that all circumstance is under Divine control.

II. THAT CONTROLLED AND CONSECRATED FEELING, NOT AN INFLEXIBLE APATHY, IS THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE CONDITION. We are not to quench our feeling, or to impose on ourselves or others by the appearance of apathy. We are to weep and to rejoice; but (1) our sorrow and our joy are both to be regulated—we are to “let our moderation appear unto all men;” and (2) our sorrow and our joy are both to be consecrated to God,—the one is to be borne with a resignation which is not a sullen endurance of the inevitable, but a filial acceptance of the decision of the wise and faithful Father of spirits; the other is to be accepted with thankfulness, and dedicated to the service of the Supreme One and the surrounding ones.

III. THAT A TRUE SPIRITUAL CONDITION IS ATTAINABLE, NOT BY UNAIDED INDIVIDUAL WILL, BUT BY HELP OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT. (2 Cor. xii. 10; Phil. iv. 13.)

IV. THAT NEITHER ULTIMATE ABSORPTION, NOR UTTER DESTRUCTION, BUT AN EVER-LIVING SPIRIT IN A GLORIFIED BODY, IS THE HOPE OF THE WISE AND TRUE. “He preached unto them *Jesus, and the resurrection.*”—C.

Vers. 18—21.—*Curiosity at the feet of Christ.* In the company which gathered on Mars’ Hill, to listen to the Christian teacher, we have a picture of curiosity sitting at the feet of Christ. For it is clear that this was not a court sitting to try a prisoner, but a chance company of citizens, wishing to hear what new and strange doctrine this visitor had brought them.

I. THE CURIOSITY WHICH IS CONTEMPTUOUS. “What will this babbler say?” said some, using the language of superciliousness. They evidently thought it was hardly worth while to pause in their gossip to listen to this new speaker; nevertheless they condescended to hear him for five minutes or a quarter of an hour! When men assume this attitude toward Christ and his gospel, they may expect to gain nothing at all from him. “God resisteth the proud.” Except we be converted from the spirit of contemptuousness, we shall not enter the kingdom of heavenly truth.

II. THE CURIOSITY WHICH IS FRIVOLOUS. The audience on the Acropolis included some who were not contemptuous, but simply curious; they wanted to hear “some new thing” (ver. 21), to learn what was to be said of those “strange gods” which this Jew was “setting forth” (ver. 18). If there is nothing directly unfavourable, there is nothing actually favourable in this spirit of undevout inquisitiveness. No one attending the sanctuary in this temper has any right to expect a blessing. The disciple who brings nothing better than this to the feet of the Master may expect to go away unenlightened. But he *may not* depart unblessed. Of the men who clave to Paul and believed (ver. 34), there were probably some who came on no high purpose bent, and who found more than they sought. Better come and listen, even from empty curiosity, than refuse to hear; better bring in the multitude with this inducement, than leave them outside in ignorance and error.

III. THE CURIOSITY WHICH IS EARNEST. Shall we not think that among the “certain men” who did believe, there were found a few who went up the steps of Mars’ Hill sincerely desirous of learning what was true? Was not Dionysius or Damaris one whose heart had some “hunger after righteousness”? Certainly it is they who come in order that they may know the truth, who are curious to hear that they may be prompt to do the will of God—it is *they* who are likely to “be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” “Of such is the kingdom of heaven;” and to such it is that the Master says, “Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Those who earnestly desire to know (1) what is the character and the attitude of God, (2) what are the real conditions of salvation and eternal life, (3) how they may best live to please God and to benefit the world,—these shall not return empty-minded; they shall be filled (Matt. v. 6).—C.

Vers. 22—29.—*God revealed: his nature and relation.* Paul’s spirit was “stirred” with holy indignation, and with pure and strong compassion, as he witnessed the

abounding signs of superstition in the streets of Athens. But he had the wisdom to begin his address to these "men of Athens" by an expression which they would take to be complimentary. He told them that he perceived they were *abundantly religious*. He did not conclude this from witnessing their numerous divinities, but from the inscription he had read on an altar, "To the unknown God." Adroitly seizing on this as proof positive that they were in ignorance as to the true object of worship, he said that he could declare to them the Deity whom they were ignorantly or unconsciously worshipping. Then he spoke out the everlasting truth concerning the living God, which he had learned, and in the knowledge of which he stood superior, not only to those degenerate philosophers, but to the wisest man that had ever spoken their language and immortalized their city.

1. THE NATURE OF GOD. 1. Paul taught the unity of the Godhead, "*God that made* he world," etc.; a very noticeable singular. He taught, concerning his nature, that this was: 2. Spiritual; such that it is a vain and senseless thing to try to make any likeness of him. "*God is a Spirit*," we ourselves being his children, and it is not in gold or stone or silver to produce any sort of semblance of him (ver. 29). 3. Independent; so that he does not need the service of human hands. Except as expressions of our feelings of penitence, or trust, or gratitude, or homage, all offerings are an insult to his majesty and his power (ver. 25; and see Ps. l. 8—13). 4. Omnipresent. We need repair to the interior of no temple walls to find him, for he is "*Lord of heaven and earth*" (ver. 24), filling immensity with his presence. He is not far from any one of us; he compasses our path and our lying down; he besets us behind and before; we cannot go where he is not (ver. 27). 5. Sovereign. He is Lord of heaven and earth; he is the Divine Ruler of all.

II. THE DIVINE RELATION TO MANKIND. We not only want to know generally who and what God is; we also and equally want to know what is the particular relation in which he stands to us. And what, we ask, does he desire we should be to him? Here is the answer: 1. He is the Maker of the world in which we live: he "*made the world and all things therein*" (ver. 24). 2. He is the Divine Benefactor from whom all blessings flow: "*He giveth to all life*," etc. (ver. 25). 3. He is the Divine Provider and Arranger of all human affairs (ver. 26). His intelligence has foreseen, and his wisdom directed everything. 4. He is the Father of all human spirits: "*We are also his offspring*" (ver. 28). And we are so in that (1) he is the Author (ver. 26) of our common humanity (ver. 26); (2) he is sustaining us all in constant existence: "*In him we live*," etc. (ver. 28); (3) he is deeply interested in us, and desires our approach to him; he has so wrought that men should "*seek him*, if haply they might feel after him and find him." He desires to be sought and found of us, that we may commune with him and rejoice in him, that we may attain to his likeness and prepare for his nearer presence. If such is the nature of God, and such the relation in which he stands to us, then: (1) How *pitiful* a thing is (a) heathenism, the ignorance of God; and (b) atheism, the denial of God; and (c) indifference, the rejection of God! (2) *How excellent* and how wise a thing is (a) reverence for God; (b) obedience to God; (c) an earnest effort to obtain the Divine favour, and to live in his love!—C.

Ver. 30.—*God revealed: his attitude toward the sinner.* It is worth while to note, preliminarily, that Paul speaks of the pre-Christian ages as "*times of ignorance*." We know that these included much human learning. The words of the apostle were uttered on that spot where there was everything to call this to remembrance. But he would have said, and would have had us consider also, that any age in which God remained unknown was an age of ignorance. "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*" No art, no philosophy, no science, no literature, no intellectual attainments or achievements of any kind whatever will compensate for ignorance of God; the soul that knows not him is an ignorant man; the time that knows not him is an ignorant age. But the text suggests and answers a very urgent question—What is the attitude of the holy Father of spirits toward his sinful children? His holiness would lead to impartial severity; his fatherhood to exceeding tenderness and clemency. The answer is found in the words of the apostle here.

I. GOD'S ATTITUDE IN THE PRE-CHRISTIAN AGES. This was one of magnanimous forbearance. God "*winked at*" (as the text unhappily renders it), he overlooked, bore



with all that was so painful in his sight, all the unimaginable iniquity of forty centuries of human sin. *Not, indeed, without many proofs of his Divine displeasure*; not without manifestations of his holy wrath. He sent sickness, sorrow, calamity, death, as marks of his meaning in regard to sin. But for long ages of evil, in which men were everywhere sinning *directly* against him by their idolatries and their atheisms and their practical infidelities, and *indirectly* against him by their sins against one another and the wrongs they did themselves, God's chief attitude toward his rebellious subjects was that of *Divine magnanimity*. 1. He did not punish them in proportion to their ill deserts. He "kept silence" (Ps. l. 21). He "dealt not with them after their sins," etc. (Ps. ciii. 10). 2. He did confer on them great and continuous loving-kindness through every age (ch. xiv. 16, 17).

II. HIS ATTITUDE SINCE THE COMING OF HIS SON. He "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The entrance of the "kingdom of God" was attended with the utterance of this strong imperative, "Repent" (Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17; Mark vi. 12). The last, solemn commission of the ascending Lord was to sound this note of repentance "among all nations" (Luke xxiv. 47). The apostle of the Gentiles, divinely taught, preached to Jew and Gentile "repentance toward God," etc. (ch. xx. 21). And wherever this gospel is preached unto men, there is announced the Divine mandate, "Repent." We know: 1. *Its real significance*. It is the turning of the heart, and therefore of the life, from sin and folly to God and to his service. 2. *Its breadth of application*. It is coextensive with the race; it reaches to the remotest land and to the most distant age; none so pure of heart and life that they need not, none so base that they may not, none so old that they cannot repent. 3. *The consequences of impenitence*. They are (1) God's displeasure now, and (2) his final condemnation and punishment.—C.

Ver. 31.—*God revealed; his holy purpose*. We ask not only—Who or what is he? what is his character and spirit? what is his present attitude towards us? we ask also—*What is his purpose concerning us?* That one infinite God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," who holds our destiny in his sovereign hand,—is it his intention that the lamp of his lighting, the human spirit (Prov. xx. 27), shall go out utterly at death, or that that spirit shall shine in another sphere? And if so, what are to be the conditions of that life beyond the river? The reply is—

I. THAT GOD WILL CONTINUE TO US OUR EXISTENCE IN ANOTHER STATE, AND WILL JUDGE US FOR OUR ACTIONS HERE. "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world." We do not suppose that time hereafter will be measured as it is now, and that the "day" of the other life will correspond with "a day" of our present experience. But the time will come in the future life when "we shall appear before the judgment-seat." God has "appointed unto man once to die," and "after this the judgment." Clearly enough, in the thought and purpose of God, this life is only the commencement of our existence, the probation period on which the long results of the eternal world depend. So far from this being "the be-all and end-all" of humanity, it is but the preface to the large volume that succeeds; it is but the river which runs down to and is lost in the sea.

II. THAT GOD'S JUDGMENT OF US WILL BE ONE OF PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS. "In righteousness." 1. There will be no trace of partiality, no smallest shade of favouritism; none will fare the better, none the worse, for class, or sex, or parentage, or nationality. 2. Regard will be had to *all* the particulars of human action. "God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing" (Eccles. xii. 14): all thoughts—the "work" of the understanding; all feelings—the "work" of the heart; all choices—the "work" of the will; as well as all words—the "work" of the tongue; and all deeds—the "work" of the hand. 3. Respect will be had to all that enhances or lessens responsibility; to all special privilege and opportunity on the one hand, and to all privation and disadvantage on the other.

III. THAT GOD WILL JUDGE THE WORLD BY HIS SON, OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. "By that Man," etc., even the Son of man, to whom all judgment is committed (John v. 22), who will have authority to execute judgment "because he is the Son of man" (John v. 27). Christ will be our Judge. His special relationship to us eminently fits him for that supreme position. 1. He is the Lord of our nature. 2. He knows our

nature perfectly (Heb. iv. 15). 3. He claims that we shall all come into living relation to himself; we must all be "found in him" (Phil. iii. 9; John xv. 4, 6; 1 John ii. 28).

IV. THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US STRONG ASSURANCE OF HIS DIVINE PURPOSE. "Whereof he hath given," etc. We have an assurance of such intention in : 1. Our own consciousness of ill desert and incomplete retribution. We feel that sin demands condemnation and punishment, and that our own individual guilt has not received its due penalty. For how much and how many things do we deserve the reproof of the Divine voice, the infliction of the Divine hand! 2. Our observation of the course of abandoned and wicked men. How many are they who go down to the grave with (as it assuredly appears) unpunished sins on their soul! 3. The general apprehension of mankind. 4. But *the* assurance of God's purpose is in the language and the life of Jesus Christ; more especially in the fact of his resurrection, preceding, predicting, and ensuring our own. (1) How foolish to treat as if it were the whole of our career that which is no more than the commencement! (2) How wise to live in view of that great day of account! (3) How needful to be rightly related to the supreme Judge!—O.

Vers. 1—9.—*Paul at Thessalonica.* I. HIS WORK. The synagogue was here again the scene of labour; the substance of the evangel again the theme of his discourse. 1. *This is in contents ever the same*; founded on the Scriptures. His special function as an apostle did not set him free from the authority of the past. Religion at any epoch is the fulfilment of all that has gone before and the prophecy of all that is to be. But let us beware of the slavery of the letter, and seek the truth of the freely developing Spirit. Fresh light and truth are to break forth at every epoch from the Scriptures. Preaching culminates in Christ. The Messiah must suffer and rise. Paul had no other theme than the crucified and risen One. The triumph of the spiritual element in mankind in and through, in spite of and over, suffering,—this is the eternal message of Christianity to mankind. 2. *The results the same.* Some believe, others not. The good ground for the seed is there or it is not there. Vain to seek to penetrate below this mystery. Women again are specially named as favourable to the gospel. It is fair to argue that, when the feelings and the intuitions lead the judgment, the verdict will be for Christ and his religion. Divine grace does not court those in high station; certainly it does not repel them.

II. THE BEARING OF THE ENEMIES OF THE GOSPEL. 1. *Instinctive perversion of the truth.* As before, jealousy, whether proceeding from self-interest or sectarian pride, attacks the apostles. Their enemies would misrepresent the emissaries of peace, as public disturbers and revolutionaries. 2. *Glaring inconsistency.* They commit the very offence of which they accuse the apostles. They play on the feelings of the mob. It is a sign of weakness or of insincerity when men must drag the fickle multitude into such questions. The mob may be turned momentarily to any account. If they favour the gospel, they are despised as stupid (John vii. 47—49). If they can be stirred up against it, their clamour is equally used as evidence.

III. THE EPISODE OF HOSPITALITY. Good Jason shelters these dangerous guests. The guest who is loved and cherished in spite of danger to the host, will bring a blessing on the head of the latter. Be mindful of hospitality—the true hospitality, which gives without asking in return (Heb. xiii. 2).—J.

Vers. 10—15.—*Nobility of soul at Berea.* Berea stands out as a bright oasis in the dreary landscape of persecution. When Paul and Silas enter the synagogue, they find themselves in a new atmosphere. They find "men of nobler soul" than the dishonest cavillers and intriguers of Philippi and of Thessalonica. What were the elements of this nobility of soul?

I. WILLING AND UNPREJUDICED RECEPTION OF NOVEL VIEWS. This spontaneous receptiveness springs only from the rooted love of truth. Let us not forget how startling and how shocking was the story of a crucified Messiah to Jewish prejudice; it may help us to appreciate the candour of these men.

II. INDEPENDENT INQUIRY. They did not carry on a battle of notions with notions; they went to the sources, they studied the documents and facts. Let Protestants learn a lesson, and be true to themselves. In our time people are only beginning to under-

stand the Scriptures in the new light thrown by history upon them. The study of the Bible is a right, a duty, and a profound science. Hasty generalizations and fixed opinions must give way before larger light.

III. TRUE FAITH AND FREE INQUIRY GO HAND-IN-HAND. It is only the profound believer who can afford to doubt. The faith which condemns inquiry, or stops it at a certain point, or is afraid of "going too far," is a blind faith. On the other hand, the "free-thinking," which owns no religious impulse, is never deep nor sound thinking. The sincere spirit of inquiry, as seen in the noblest scientific men, is closely allied to the true evangelical temper. What we all need is a living love in all our studies, as opposed to a dead and notional knowledge. The enthusiasm for truth is a noble form of faith; and each who pursues it for himself will enjoy a measure of its rewards. We must try the grounds of faith as we try the metal of coins, and with the greater attention, in that more is at stake. No resting upon the *ipsi dixit* even of an apostle satisfied the Bereans, nor ought it to satisfy us.—J.

Vers. 16—34.—*Paul at Athens.* Paul stands in Athens, amidst the master-pieces of Greek art and the memorials of Greek wisdom. It is not admiration or æsthetic delight which is awakened in him, but moral indignation. Christianity is not opposed to art; but Christianity does not approve the worship of sensuous or ideal beauty apart from moral earnestness. In the true relation, religion absorbs art into itself; when art is substituted for religion, there is moral decay. Nor is Christianity hostile to philosophy. On the contrary, there was in Greek philosophy a preparation for Christ. There were germs of truth in the Epicurean and the Stoic schools which Christianity incorporated, while it corrected the one-sidedness of these philosophies. The Epicurean built his practical system on human weakness, the Stoic his on pride. The gospel will not excuse sin on the ground of weakness; nor found a righteousness of man's own on pride (see the noted discussion of these schools, and the relation of the gospel to them, in Pascal's 'Pensées'). Between these extremes, as between those of Sadduceeism and Phariseeism, the gospel ever makes its way. These academicians of Athens might well be anxious to know what the "ugly little Jew" had to say. Long had the mighty *logos* or dialectic of Plato and Aristotle and their successors and rivals ruled the world. What could the fanatical Jew have to say? An immortal discourse is the reply to these questions of curiosity.

I. GOD UNKNOWN, YET KNOWABLE. The speaker recognizes the reverence of the Athenians. The heathen were prepared for the gospel, all the more from the weariness and failure of their age-long "groping after God." In the inscription on the altar was the witness of the desire to worship all forms of divinity, whether to them known or unknown. Both Greeks and Romans recognized, above and beyond the definite gods and goddesses of the Pantheon, the indefinable in Deity, the mystery of that Essence, to us and to all, as to them, incomprehensible. So far we are all on a level with the Athenians. But there are special senses in which God is unknown to the worshipper.

1. To the sensual and sin-loving heart. Many there are whose heart is like the Agora of Athens or a Pantheon; one idol stands beside another. Wrath, pride, lust, avarice, treachery, ambition,—these are their gods. And again, science, art, money, the husband, the wife, the goods of this world. And in a neglected corner stands the altar with the inscription, "To the unknown God!"
2. To the wise in their own conceit. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God;" "He resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the lowly."
3. To the formalists and externalists in religion. For the drama of an external ritual is rather a screen between the soul and God, if the soul be not bent on finding him.
4. To all who seek him otherwise than with the pure and lowly heart, coming by the Way, the Truth, and the Life to the Father. Though in one sense "God is great; I know him not," must be the confession of all hearts, from the lowliest to the wisest, in another the good news of the gospel proclaims—God may be known, is known; and every name by which he is known resolves itself into love. He is concealed, yet revealed; unknown, yet known; defined, yet undefinable. 'Tis a great yet a small part of his ways that we can understand.

II. GOD REVEALED IN THE CREATION. He has made the world and all things therein. Animate and inanimate nature, body and spirit, all have the stamp of omnipotence and of omniscience in the unity of a Mind. Every step in science makes more clear



this unity; and in the last resort this unity is not conceivable as "law" or "force" merely, but only as the living and the loving God. In his infinite majesty, heaven is his throne, earth his footstool. He is in himself both Temple and Inhabitant. The voice of God bursts asunder the system of idolatry and superstition. The latter denies that God can be found only in fixed places, by means of fixed rites and mediations. The true temple is everywhere; "The walls of the world are that." In the Church, where the gospel of his Son is heard, and above all in the heart, where he indwells in the power of his Spirit, is the temple of the living God.

III. GOD REVEALED IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD. As love. Needing nothing from men's hands; they incessantly feel the need of him. Life itself is sweet, and in that sweetness we have an instance of his love. There is a joy in breathing, moving about, looking, learning, experiencing manifold experiences in this "fair world of God." And each and every pleasure, lower and higher, leads up to God and his love. The tie that binds us to our kind is an expression of the same love. Sympathy is possible, is actual, between men of every colour and clime. The mechanism of thought and feeling is alike in all. All men suffer and rejoice from the same causes. The unity of the human race reflects the unity of God's mind in wisdom and in love. Men form one people, one race: this is the great thought the gospel throws upon the world, and teaches us to say, in deeper senses than the heathen knew, "I am a man; nothing human is foreign to me." He has set bounds to man's habitations. All the effects of climate, of physical configuration of the earth, distribution of land and water, so interesting to the student of man and his dwelling-place, are conditions fixed by the same wise and loving hand. God is in history. His thoughts alone are living. Athens was not for ever, nor Rome; but the Divine thought, whence proceeded the culture of Greece, the law and order of Rome, lives on, and is revealed in changing forms from age to age. And towards the "far-off goal" of an infinite love, we doubt not, the whole of creation and of history moves. The end of all is the union of man with God. Though in one sense he "needeth not anything," in another he needs all—the whole love of his whole rational universe. The process of thought in the world is a process of "groping after" and of finding God. God wills that we should find him, but only as the result of our seeking. Therefore he "half reveals" and "half conceals" himself. He is far off, yet near; in each and all the spheres of our knowledge. Our being rests on his; ours are borrowed lives (Isa. liv. 6; 1 Cor. viii. 6). "In the Father," says Cyprian, "we are, from him all life comes; in the Son, who lives, we have life; in the Spirit, who is the Breath of all flesh, we have our being." His offspring we are—by creation in his image, by redemption through his Son. This truth we know from Scripture, from the human heart, from life; and the effect of this knowledge may well be to produce holy humility, mixed with confidence and joy.

IV. TRUE THEOLOGY AND WORSHIP. 1. *The heathen draw a wrong inference from the true saying on men being the offspring of God.* If we are of Divine origin, they seemed to argue, then the gods are of human kind, and images of them may be made. On the contrary, Paul argues, those who are of Divine origin despise themselves if they render worship to any but the supreme Head and Lord. When we say that God is in affinity with man, we do not affirm that man can represent him in thought, much less in images of plastic art. The philosopher Xenophanes had said that if the animals had gods, they would imagine them in their own likeness—the god of the horse would be a horse, etc. The truth is that only our ideal or higher nature is the mirror of God. 2. *In conscience we find his clearest reflex.* And ignorance of him in this nearest sphere of knowledge is not excusable, as St. Paul teaches in Rom. i. Men did not like to retain God in their knowledge. At the same time, the conscience needs light from without. There are dark ages of the world, when men have comparatively little light, and which may be viewed as ages of God's forbearance, wherein he "overlooks" much that men do, "not knowing what they do." 3. *But Christ is a Turning-point of history.* Before him, the period of "ignorance;" with him and after him, the true light. Before him, forbearance; henceforward, the just judgment of the world. The description of the person and functions of Christ. He is Man; a member of humanity, a partaker of human flesh and blood, subject to death. As High Priest, he is one "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." And as Judge, he is qualified on the same grounds. It is a common feeling which requires that a man should be judged by his peers. Know-

ledge and pity, severity and compassion, are united in Christ. 4. *The call to repentance.* It is an urgent call. The more indifferent and light-hearted the listeners, the more urgently it must sound. It is an absolute call, admitting of no exceptions. No ignorance and no philosophy, no dignity or rank, can exempt men from the immediate command of God to repent. Amidst the depths of sin and the heights of virtue, in paganism and in Christendom, the new heart and the new life are indispensable.

V. THE RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL AT ATHENS. (Ver. 32.) 1. *Some scoffed, some procrastinated.* These are ever the two main classes of those who turn a deaf ear to the Divine Word. Some make light of the truth, some put off attention to it until the "more convenient season." "Faith in to-morrow, instead of Christ, is Satan's nurse for man's perdition." Paul departed from among them, and came not back; the "tender grace" of the day of salvation vanished, not again to be found. 2. *But some believed.* Of whom Dionysius among men alone is mentioned; and of the women, Damaris, with some others. We need, however, to remind ourselves that great numbers are no sign of the true Church. There are many more of common stones than of jewels in its structure, according to the ordinary valuation; but God's measures are not ours. According to ancient testimonies, a bright light went forth from the Church at Athens. The splendid intellectual culture of Athens remains the heritage of the few; the gospel pours its common blessing on mankind. The relation of the Christian to the art and science of the world. (1) He is not to despise them. The master-works of genius are gifts of God; and in their way they bear testimony to the universal striving of the human spirit after the reconciliation of sense and spirit, the human with the Divine. The aberrations of great spirits are more instructive than the meaningless commonplaces of ordinary minds. (2) At the same time, he is to apply to them the Christian scale of judgment. Christianity cannot countenance immoral art or godless science. If the heart of the artist and scientific man be sanctified, their works and studies will tend to the glory of God.—J.

Vers. 1—9.—*Thessalonica.* Interest of the occasion, in view of the two Epistles afterwards written. The contrast between the Thessalonian and Philippian populations partly due to the presence of the Jewish synagogue. The Greek proselytes numerous. The Jews divided into two classes, the devout and the fanatical. The political element always ready to be called into use against the gospel, so that the multitude and the rulers were troubled.

I. Take the whole narration as affording a glimpse into THE STATE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE at that time. 1. The elements of hope in it—the Jewish religion and synagogue worship, the openness of Gentile mind to inquiry; the two forces of Roman order and Greek intellectual culture. 2. The elements of corruption. The rabble at the mercy of evil-minded men stirring them up. The decrees of Cæsar mere despotic acts of power. Ignorance and indifference to religious questions. Had they understood Christianity, they would never have supposed it to be against civil order. 3. The certainty foreshown. The spiritual power must prevail. Such a world must be overturned.

II. THE CHRISTIANITY WHICH PAUL PREACHED. 1. Founded on the Old Testament Scriptures, and therefore seeking a basis in the synagogue. 2. Setting forth the redeeming work of Jesus Christ as its substance. 3. Adapted to all, Jews and Greeks alike, and calling the influence of women to its service. 4. Though itself peace, yet, by its contrast with the world, turning it upside down. We must be quiet and orderly in our methods, but we must expect that spiritual forces will stir up opposition. The end is with the truth.—R.

Ver. 6.—*The power of God in the world.* "These that have turned," etc. Thessalonians excitable, especially on the subject of political change (see Epistles). The misrepresentations of spiritual work proceed from two causes: (1) fanatical opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus; (2) the ignorant fears of sordid and selfish minds. Yet the progress of the work must be maintained.

I. THE THOUGHTS OF MEN CONTRASTED WITH THE THOUGHTS OF GOD. 1. Of the religious fanatics and superstitious. The fears for truth leading to false alliances. Compromise of principle. 2. Of rulers. Government is apt to fear for itself, because

it knows not its own true basis. Decrees of Cæsar must sometimes be resisted. 3. Of the populace. Mistaken ideas of their own interests. Deceivableness under the influence of demagogues or those who pander to their lowest feelings. The blessing was rejected. Jesus was a better King for the people than Cæsar.

II. THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE WORLD. 1. To explain the Divine dealings with mankind, and reveal the purpose running through both the Jewish and Gentile histories. 2. To lift up the multitudes and deliver them from despotism and deception. 3. To proclaim a new world in place of the old, the coming of the kingdom, which is not the exaltation of an imperial throne, but the reign of God on the earth, in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. 4. To stir up in the hearts of men a desire for the better things. The world within us must be turned upside down before the true peace is built up.—R.

Vers. 10—15.—*Berea*. The different state of mind among the Jews. The unbelief and opposition of men overruled by God to the fulfilment of his purposes. The footsteps of the apostolic messengers quickened. The sudden stride of the message from Berea to Athens—scarcely likely to have been taken by Paul without an impulse in the circumstances driving him forward. Yet, as so much depended on the one man's work, as no one else so fitted to lay the foundations of Christianity in Greece, he must be lifted above the level of his own thoughts and plans. The whole passage illustrates the union of providence and grace.—R.

Ver. 12.—*Preparation for the truth*. "Therefore many of them believed." Contrast between the ignoble prejudice and the noble openness of mind. Responsibility for our faith. Knowledge and practice bound up together.

I. THE TRUE PREPARATION FOR DIVINE BLESSINGS. 1. A state of mind. At liberty to think. Open to teaching. Desire for instruction. The two kinds of scepticism (*skepsis*), inquiry for truth, inquiry for reasons against faith. 2. A course of action and habit. Reading of the Scriptures daily, with a set purpose, devoutly, in connection with the preached Word, with an intention to follow their guidance.

II. THE TRUE FAITH SETTLED ON ITS BROAD FOUNDATION. 1. As distinguished from mere individual self-assertion and ignoble pride. 2. As accepting the standard of revealed truth. 3. As apostolic, seeing that "those things were so," i.e. as Paul represented them. The Pauline faith was the only faith which linked together the Old Testament and the New.

III. RESULTS FOLLOWING THE USE OF MEANS. A lesson to both preachers and hearers.—R.

Vers. 16—34.—*Paul at Athens*. Consider—

I. The connection of the whole with THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY. The Greek mind evangelized. The function of Greek thought in the development of doctrine. The contrast between the gospel and philosophy. The step towards the conquest of the world.

II. The illustration of THE APOSTOLIC METHOD. Adaptation of the truth to every class of mind. Difference of the preaching when the foundation of the Jewish Scriptures was for the time forsaken. Important difference of results, showing that there must be something intervening between idolatry and Christian faith, besides natural religion. The resurrection must stand on its true foundation, or it is mocked at. The spiritual truth is mere "babbling" to those who look upon it from the naturalistic point of view.

III. The picture of HUMAN HELPLESSNESS presented. Intellectual restlessness of Athens. The judgment of God overhanging the moral corruption. Times of ignorance. Idolatry, the more hideous in its decorations of artistic beauty. Worship of the human body. Social miseries of the Greek world. The one man among the multitude, type of the spiritual force which, though a grain of mustard seed in apparent magnitude, was a germ of life in the midst of the universal decay and death. So in the decline and fall of the Roman empire. A great lesson on (1) the sufficiency and power of the gospel; (2) the responsibility of man.—R.

Ver. 18.—*The world's want supplied*. "He preached unto them. Jesus, and the



resurrection." Paul at Athens a typical fact. No place so representative. No preacher so equal to the occasion. His spirit stirred within him. Idolatry—turning human greatness into ruin. "*To the unknown God.*" Great opportunity well employed. No dreary denunciations. No lowering the gospel by admixture with human speculations. He presages the time when the intellect of Greece and the power of Rome would both alike be Christ's. He dared their mockery, to win their hearts.

I. A PERSONAL SAVIOUR. Jesus: 1. Presented as *Divine*. "Setter forth of strange gods." The facts of the gospel so described as to reveal the Divinity. 2. Set forth as an *Object of trust*. Just what such minds required, to look away from self and the vagaries of the mind. Names enough in the ancient world. This Name above every name.

II. A PRACTICAL APPEAL. 1. To a true *worship* in place of the false. Religion universal. Paul's preaching was not intended merely to change the forms, but the substance; to place religion on its true foundation, not as man's offering to propitiate the Deity, but as his acceptance of God's love—in fellowship. Jesus is in the midst of us, therefore we worship no longer an unknown God. 2. To a *new life* in place of the old. A great city like Athens reminds us of the world's wants—power to live a better life. He did not preach a mere story of the past, but a proclamation of a new kingdom of grace, which should make all life afresh. Words! Examples! They had them. But they wanted power. There was a new fact before their eyes, a living man changed and made from a persecutor into a missionary. Nothing like it in Greece. 3. To a *great future*. The resurrection. Personal prospect. A fact more than arguments. Messages to Corinth. "*In Christ shall all be made alive*" (1 Cor. xv.). May such doctrine prove its sufficiency in us!—R.

Ver. 23.—*The worship of faith*. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Christianity aggressive. Insufficiency of all forms of religion apart from true knowledge. The true philanthropy of the missionary spirit.

I. THE WORLD'S IGNORANCE OF GOD INCONSISTENT WITH ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP OF HIM. 1. Athens the representation of the moral helplessness of men without revelation. Knowledge which is ignorance. 2. The practical view of the Divine character. Indifference to righteousness, vain trust in benevolence, mere sentiment of dependence.

II. THE FAITH OF THE CHRISTIAN THE TRUE BASIS OF RELIGION. 1. As a simple acceptance of Divine teaching. 2. As a growth of knowledge through experience and practical endeavour. "If any man will do his will," etc. 3. The actual fellowship of the spiritual life. Influence of the higher mind and larger soul upon the lower. Effect of loving self-sacrifice in opening the mind to larger views of the Divine character. 4. The opportunities of the world rightly used. Nature leading to God, not enslaving the soul. Culture lifting up the intellect and desires. "All things are ours."—R.

Ver. 28.—*Man in God*. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." The greatness and humility of the apostle—an illustration of the nature and method of Christianity. Over all the glory of Athens the pall of spiritual death. An unknown God amongst them. The pride of the ancient world still clung to empty superstitions, only half, if at all, believed in. Boldness of the messenger. Polytheism is false. The human heart is claimed for God. From their own altar to the Christian announcement of coming judgment. An appeal to reason, conscience, experience, the universal spirit of humanity.

I. A GREAT PRIMARY TRUTH set forth in two aspects—*natural and spiritual*. 1. All religion rests on a natural foundation. We are creatures of God. Threefold view of humanity—as *life*, as *activity*, as *being* or *character*. Unsatisfactory view of human nature which omits any of these. We live not alone for earth, but for eternity. Not alone to exist, but to unfold our possibilities, intellectual, moral, spiritual. God the God of providence. History. Social life. But natural religion insufficient. Has proved itself so—must be so. 2. Religion is the work in man of the spiritual. The great fact of a moral ruin cannot be overlooked. Ancient heathen admitted the irreconcilable opposition of heaven and earth. Refuge in Promethean pride. Despondency. They openly said, "It is better to die than to live." Errand of the gospel was one of hope. Proclamation of the life of man in God. Spiritual power at hand

The message written out in the facts of the gospel. Paul led up his hearers to Christ. To us religion is Christ. The resurrection is the seal on the promise of life.

II. Consider THE APPLICATIONS OF SUCH A TRUTH. 1. The essential and supreme question of every man's existence is what he is to God, and what God is to him. *Our life in him.* 2. There is only one religion which meets man's wants, that which has come from God. 3. The religion of Christ is adapted to the humblest as well as the highest mind, to the lowest as well as the loftiest condition.—R.

Vers. 32, 33.—*Opportunity.* “Now when they heard,” etc. The hearing of truth is the demand of man's position. Temptation “of such minds as the Athenians” to regard themselves as able to be their own teachers. Facts often stranger than fiction. Philosophy has been a great obstacle to Christianity. So still intellectual pride and prejudice. The two classes of hearers still represented—mockers and triflers.

I. RESPONSIBILITY IN HEARING. 1. Application of mind. Concentration on the subject. Openness to persuasion. 2. Surrender of the heart to truth. The message not addressed simply to reason. A speculative spirit may easily admit a cloud of objections and difficulties which obscure the Word. Procrastination means indifference. Enough is already understood and felt to justify practice.

II. SPECIAL CRISIS OF OPPORTUNITY. Whether in listening to the Word, or in receiving Divine invitation through providential circumstances, opportunity at times gathers to a point where resistance becomes guilt. So it was in the Jewish nation at the advent of Christ. So at Athens by the visit of Paul. The Word may be taken away: 1. By the work of sin within us, hardening the heart. 2. By changes in the outward life. 3. By summons into eternity. “Take heed how ye hear;” “Work while it is yet day;” “Now is the accepted time.”—R.

Vers. 2, 3.—*The work of three sabbath days.* It was a great idea, and much more than mere idea with Paul, to “redeem the time.” He would not have stayed a continuous three weeks in one place doing nothing at all, much less doing what was good for nothing, or for very little. The time he gave, therefore, to a subject, and the stress he laid upon it, may fairly measure to a certain degree his persuasion of the value of it. There are subjects which depend upon their very mode of treatment, not in the merely ordinary sense for producing greater or less impression, but for apprising us of the estimate they purport to put on themselves. And this thought may certainly help to guide us, even in these days. It may help work conviction as to the reality of things long “believed among us,” but perhaps never more attacked or less boldly grasped than at this present. For we here may notice that—

I. PAUL TAKES THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES AS HIS TEXT-BOOK. 1. It would have been particularly like Paul to have dealt with his subject or subjects through a period of upwards of three weeks, on their *own merits*, and not have laden them with any unimportant connection with things that had gone before. His method shows that the connection was *not* deemed unimportant by him. 2. If Paul does deal with great subjects, which might have been discussed on their *own merits*, in very close connection with their associations with the Old Testament, it were inevitable that those associations must cling to them. They will in a sense bring with them the atmosphere, or the fragrance of it, to which they have been accustomed. 3. There can be no doubt, no contradiction, as to the connection of the promised Messiah in the Old Testament with the sacrifices, which are really its most unique feature; nor can there be any doubt of the great sacrifices themselves, that they were in the main *propitiatory*.

II. THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS THE OLD TESTAMENT TOPIC SELECTED OUT OF ALL OTHERS BY PAUL. For what conceivable purpose should the apostles have taken all the trouble and encountered all the dangers they did, in order to reconcile the minds of the Jews, to whom they preached, to the identity of the foretold Messiah of the Scriptures with the Jesus crucified of late at Jerusalem? There could be *no* satisfactory reason for this but one, that the suffering of Christ unto death was the central requirement of the whole position. While the Jew from first to last objected to the subject (1) because the crucifixion of Christ lay at his door and on his conscience; (2) and because the Jew had never consented to believe in such a King as Christ, such a grandeur as the grandeur of the cross for him, or such a method of recovering and exalting the distinction

of his own nation, as the method which went right down to the root of its decay, disorder, misery! It would surely seem that nothing could be more nugatory than to labour as apostles laboured, and to suffer as they suffered, and to be filled with zeal as they were filled with zeal, if it were for mere persistence' sake in the matter of an unwelcome historical identification. Whether for Jew or Gentile, the death of Christ was with the apostles the foundation theme. But with the Jew it was argued as now, with all the light and necessarily with the associations that his Scriptures must throw upon it.

III. THE INVARIABLE SEQUEL-SUBJECT OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST—THE RESURRECTION—IS PREACHED BY PAUL. As much as all the deepest traceable significance of the death of Christ tends to humble those to whom it is preached, as "the way of salvation," so much avails the significance of his resurrection to comfort and to raise them! The glory of glories for Christ, it is, and it is ever scripturally exhibited as, the joy of joys for the believer in Christ. These, then, were the great topics upon which Paul and his companions and other apostles were constantly insisting. Let it be explained as it may, these purport to be the message of Heaven to earth; let it be objected to as it may, nothing else comes in their place. The forces that lie hidden, yet scarcely hidden, in both of these are now at least testified by an unsurpassed mass and variety of practical and irrefutable evidence. Men's hearts have been softened, humbled, and won to the exercise of profoundest trust and firmest faith by the fact of the sufferings and death of Christ. Their highest nature has answered to the quickening influence of the clearly revealed and clearly exhibited fact of the Resurrection, and so far forth its correlative, immortality. The pride of man rarely finds its gain or its object in rejecting the latter, yet is it abundantly doubtful whether any man come to it rightly, much less come to it to the purest and truest advantage, except through that approach which Paul found so often "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," but to "some" others even at Thessalonica (ver. 4) "the power of God and the wisdom of God."—B.

Vers. 11, 12.—*A comparison justly invidious.* In harmony with the directions of Jesus Christ himself, and with the dictates of wisdom as against presumptuousness. Paul and Silas, when endangered by their ministrations in one place, sped on in all fidelity and zeal to another. It may also be not without its significant interest that, as we are told, they were "sent away," or "sent on," by the brethren. Had they gone away at any time and *ceased from their work*, they and their motives and their love might well have been objects of suspicion. But the continuity of their devotion, and the renewal again and again of work after disappointment upon disappointment, protect them from suspicion, and even add to their praise. It is one of the greater practical difficulties of life to resist successfully the distressing and disintegrating natural operation of perpetual disappointments, and it is one of the severer tests of an uplifted faith and enduring purpose that "often foiled" is not accepted as failure, and that "cast down" does not mean "destroyed." On the other hand, (1) had the apostles been enabled to hold their ground against every attack of the spirit of persecution, this would have been equivalent to an unceasing repetition of miracle; and the enmity of the human heart might have been silenced indeed, but long before it was *destroyed*, or had proved its own intrinsic collapse. And (2) those apostles would not have covered anything like the same ground, nor secured anything like the same experience of human nature. The language of these verses is one result, simple enough and direct, of the experience that came from the comparison of one people with another. The contrast is brought sharply into prominence by the conduct of Berea, in quick succession upon that of Thessalonica. The people of Berea are boldly pronounced "more noble than those of Thessalonica." Let us consider the ennobling reasons.

I. READINESS TO RECEIVE THE WORD. 1. There is, indeed, a "readiness to receive" which marks *greed*. 2. There is a readiness to receive which marks *credulity*. 3. There is a readiness to receive which marks the inertness of indifference. 4. There is a readiness to receive which marks a nature conscious of need, and responsive to the proper supply of that need, when proffered. The readiness to receive which now distinguished the Bereans marked thus a good and a healthy and a spiritual *instinct*. For their readiness was turned toward receiving a "word" that was true and pure



and not flattering, but faithful to reprove and to teach, as well as to stimulate and uplift by promises. Such readiness as this is noble and ennobling. It saves souls pining. It saves wasted energies. It obviates vagrant pursuits. And for all such it substitutes a genuine education.

II. DETERMINATION TO BE COMPETENT TO "GIVE A REASON OF THE HOPE" WHICH THERE HAD BEEN "READINESS TO RECEIVE." 1. The very attitude of the inquirer has something of the noble in it, when compared with the custom of the *decrier*. 2. The mastery of prejudice is in itself a sign of nobility, while the reign of prejudice means an obstructiveness which infers to none greater loss than to the subject of it. 3. The searcher *into* truth does in the very act ingratiate himself with truth. "Happy is the man" who seeks for it as for silver, and searches for it as for hid treasure (Prov. ii. 2—5). 4. Openness to evidence comes inevitably of inquiring honestly, as surely as prejudice makes a shut heart and undiscerning mind. Many persons do not see because they never set themselves to look. They scarcely think it is given them to use their own natural powers. 5. Inquiringness has it in it to infer advantage (1) to individual happiness; (2) to social kindness; (3) to public and general progress. 6. Inquiringness, when it is turned to things of higher and deeper significance, to things invisible and spiritual, to the great themes of the soul and its need of a Saviour, to the grand themes of God and his pitying love to man—*this* inquiringness carries its own praise in it. It is bound to enrich him who practises it and extorts conviction from the unwilling, while the spontaneous tribute of commendation is laid at its feet by the just and good. That kind of moral certainty that lies in strong conviction is the price won by all those who will take the trouble, in matters of Divine import, to "search" whether and how they agree and hold together.—B.

Vers. 23—32.—*The gospel's kindly encounter with novel foes.* The opportunity now presented to Paul he must at once have recognized to be one of the grandest and most critical of his career. He was for a while separated from his two loved companions, and was permitted to face his work alone in the long-time metropolis of the world's learning, grace, and art. We are perhaps to understand that Paul somewhat sensitively felt his position to be one of a special kind of responsibility. It was certainly none the less one of so much the more honour. He does not delay his work. He appears in the synagogue (ver. 17) with the Jews and the "devout." In the market-place also he is found ready to debate with those who may be willing. The citizens of Athens, and the character which now obtained to so remarkable a degree among them, promised ground upon which rapid and easy impression, at all events, might be made, whether lasting or not. This, however, was held in check to a considerable degree by the presence of not a few who not only were naturally likely to fight hard for their pet philosophies, but whose very philosophy it was in some cases to attempt to "prove all things," at least in their own idea of proving. Paul is not long in being brought into the place of chief notoriety. The kind of treatment showed to him by that ancient centre of refinement and of intellectual inquiry is vastly different from the treatment to which he had become only too accustomed at the hands of the Jews; and the kindly method and tone of the address of Paul seem to be some reflection of it. Still the gospel is to grapple, and in Athens it had its work before it. The incisiveness of Paul's style does not fall behind its courtesy. Let us notice what Paul has to say when now brought fairly in contact with all most typical of a heathen world.

I. THE TRUE APOSTLE OF CHRISTIANITY PURPORTS TO "DECLARE" WHAT THE WORLD SAYS IS "UNKNOWN," *i.e.* GOD. He "declares:" 1. A personal Creator-God, against Epicureans and all various others who either held the world to have been ever or to have come of chance. Neither Jesus himself nor Scripture records generally from beginning to end presuppose atheism, nor apply themselves to prove the existence of a personal Deity. But when nature, with all her ten thousand voices, has nevertheless let down men to a degraded unbelief, or when men have thus let down nature, these do pronounce and "declare" in no faltering tone this one starting-point of all upward progress, all knowledge, and all goodness (ver. 24). 2. A Creator-God, the opposite of depending for anything on man, inasmuch as all men depend for all things on him, including the initial breath of life, and thereupon every breath they draw. 3. A Creator-God who, so far as this world is concerned, knows one family alone, but that

family the universal one. 4. A Creator-God who does not forsake men to their own inventions, but is the present and ruling Providence among them. There is such a reality as an administration of the wide empire on earth, and that administration in each part, each greater or less distribution, is Divine, is that of God, the sovereign God. 5. A Creator-God who admits of no proxy whatsoever of idol fashion.

II. THE TRUE APOSTLE OF CHRISTIANITY UNDERTAKES TO MAKE AN UNFALTERING AFFIRMATION OF THE THINGS MOST DISTINCTIVE OF CHRISTIANITY. These shall be facts or truths, not grown of reason, not even surmised of reason; very likely *not*, in all their bearings and all the questions they suggest, such as can be accounted for by reason. They occupy by intention a unique place. They come of the pronouncement of One who brings all-sufficient credentials, and whom to disbelieve rationally is a greater difficulty for reason by far than to believe. This grand, surpassing voice of Heaven is here given as threefold. 1. It bids *repentance* on the part of man. 2. It declares *judgment* to come by Jesus Christ. 3. It declares hereunto the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ; and certainly, if the resurrection of Jesus Christ is here instanced as speaking volumes for his likely judgship, it will carry all that is necessary for showing men present at his solemn judgment-bar. Evidently nothing so much arrested men, when the world's clock was then striking, as this announcement of resurrection from the dead for Judge and judged.

III. THE TRUE APOSTLE OF CHRISTIANITY DOES NOT HIDE AWAY THE ELEMENT OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY AND THE NECESSITY OF HUMAN CO-OPERATION WITH DIVINE WORK. This is but one among many ways of asserting that man is himself a creation of reason and of heart and of conscience; in brief, of just so much as to constitute him justly responsible to his Creator. Beyond a doubt, we cannot draw the line that says where the exertion of man's will and the interposition of God's providence end or begin, nor, in all probability, could we see the line if it were drawn. It is none the less certain that both of these are facts in human life. Paul goes so far as to say that Divine arrangements (ver. 27) lead to Divine inquiries on the part of men, and are directly adapted to suggest "seeking the Lord." Notice, therefore: 1. That it lies with men, part of their simplest, first, happiest duty, to "*seek the Lord*," in distinction from the vain theory or degrading wish that the belief in the reality of the existence of God should be an absolutely *necessary outcome* of our life or natural *income* of our conviction. It is a remarkable fact that in all *highest* senses it is both one and the other of these things, but that in lower and literal sense, if it were so, it would bereave human knowledge of God of its noblest aspects, noblest tokens, and noblest uses. 2. That there is so much *uncertainty* about finding him we seek, as might well give zest and energy and trembling vigour to endeavour. 3. That the uncertainty lies much in some *moral* direction of our nature. To "find God" is not the quest of the intellect merely or chiefly. It will lie nearer the heart, at all events, and it will be greatly dependent on, say, the conscience, what it is in any man and how he heeds it. To "find God" will depend on "feeling after" him. The absence of a certain kind and amount of sensibility will in many a case decide, and "that right early," our not *finding* some one or some thing. Some truth and some people are coy. And very indisputable it is that sometimes it is of the highest truth and the highest style of human character that this is most chiefly true. 4. That to win the crown of "finding"—finding really, finding blessedly, finding for ever—is quite among the possibilities; ay, it is among the sure promises exceeding precious to the true seeker. 5. That the grand object "*sought*," "*felt after*," and "*found*" is all the time "*not far from*" any one, *i.e.* really near to every one. He is so near us in our breathing life itself. He is so near us in all those qualities which are derived from his parentage. He is so near us in bountiful goodness and in pitying, strong love.—B.

Vers. 32—34.—*Three kinds of hearing.* It is not always given to the hardest and most conscientious labourer to reap a large harvest. The day had been a day of hard work and faithful work for Paul. Arrived at sunset, he counts more disappointment than gain. This passage speaks of three kinds of hearers. And it is telling us of facts—facts that were, facts that too often *are*. Notice—

I. THERE ARE WHO HEAR AND MOCK. 1. They mock when they hear something and *fear* something. 2. They mock when they cannot confute what is spoken into their

outer ear, nor silence what speaks of itself in their inner ear. 3. They mock when they don't understand and don't try to understand. 4. They mock when they are ready to risk *everything*, rather than yield anything of self and self-will.

II. THERE ARE WHO HEAR AND PROCRASTINATE. 1. They procrastinate when they *are* persuaded—almost. 2. They procrastinate when it is no matter of “two opinions” but of active duty or public declaration of themselves. 3. They procrastinate when their mind is *quite* clear, but their heart neither honest nor earnest. 4. They procrastinate when they feel they must say something, but are not prepared either to do or to say the right something.

III. THERE ARE WHO HEAR AND BELIEVE. 1. They believe when “the Lord has opened their heart to attend to the things spoken.” 2. They believe when they feel that the things spoken are true to their need and are *for them*. 3. They believe when they are practically ready, if needs be, to “forsake” all the rest in order to “cleave to” that one Being who has “the words of eternal life.”—B.

Ver. 2.—*Paul's manner*. “And Paul, as his manner was” (Revised Version, “custom”). Luke thinks it necessary to record St. Paul's habits in connection with his missionary labours, and his point is, not that the apostle kept the sabbath day, but that he consistently observed the injunction to the first preachers that they should “begin at Jerusalem;” that is, deliver the gospel message first to the Jews. Whenever St. Paul went to a fresh town, “his manner was” to find out the Jews and join them at their meeting-place, whether that were *proseucha* or synagogue. In either case he would have the opportunity always offered to visitors to say a word of exhortation to the people. Here, at Thessalonica, the fact that St. Paul was allowed to preach for three sabbaths in succession shows the respect commanded by his character as a rabbi, and, it may be, by his earnest eloquence. We dwell on the fact that Luke recognizes a fixed custom and settled habit of the apostle, and seems to feel that anything so orderly and regular it was singular to find in so impulsive a man. A great part of religious duty concerns the formation and the preservation of godly habits, and the subject is one which may be practically and usefully treated in a Christian congregation.

I. SETTLED HABITS. It is singular that our most common association with the word “habit” should be *bad* habits, and that a much stronger form of teaching should go in the direction of warning against or curing bad habits, than in that of culturing and nourishing good ones. Moralists have given abundant counsel in respect of common habits of personal and social life, but religious teachers, even of the young, have not worthily recognized that habits may be formed in connection with the *religious* life, and that direct instruction and guidance in relation to them is imperatively needed. Our Lord had settled habits of prayer and worship, and no Christian life can be hopefully maintained without them.

II. HOW HABITS GET SETTLED. By simply doing things again and again with regularity. The philosophical and the practical explanations of the formation of habits may be given; and it may be well to show how the very muscles, nerves, and senses get fixed by continuing to act in the same direction. But the point to dwell on is that habits may be settled by intelligent intention and effort. They may be a product of *will*, and the formation of good habits is a proper exercise of the *regenerate will*. It may be further shown that relations of dependence bring on all parents, masters, or teachers, the responsibility of inciting to the formation of good habits and the due nourishment and strengthening of them.

III. HOW FAR DOES THE SETTLING OF HABITS DEPEND ON DISPOSITION? In all questions of moral culture or religious duty the natural dispositions of men have to be taken into account. To some habits come easily, and they can be as easily changed. Others only form habits after much self-mastery and conflict. But these are the persons who are best helped by habits when once they get them fixed. Such an impulsive man as St. Paul might even find it necessary to restrain himself by forcing himself into the orderliness of settled habits. Illustrate how differently different persons stand related to the great Christian duties—prayer, reading God's Word, worship, almsgiving, etc.

IV. HOW MAY SETTLED HABITS HELP THE MAN WHO HAS FORMED THEM? Illustrate, especially in relation to the religious life, two points. 1. They help him to master his



own **varying feeling**. A man is not always disposed for private prayer or public worship, but the habit keeps him related to these things, and it is often found that, while engaged in them, the needed mood of feeling will come. Custom only may take us to worship, but eye and heart may be opened when we are there. 2. They help him to overcome adverse circumstances. Hindrances of family or business life seriously affect the man who has no religious habits. They fail to hurt the man who has his life well ordered, and his regular times and ways. The habits soon get recognized, and the incidents of life take shape so as to fit in with them.—R. T.

**Ver. 3.—The three points of Pauline preaching.** In ver. 18 the point of St. Paul's teaching to the Gentiles is briefly given, and it is seen that he had but one message, which he endeavoured to adapt to his varying audiences. To the Gentiles he preached "Jesus and the resurrection;" to the Jews he preached that "Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that Jesus is the Christ." It may be noticed that to a Jewish audience St. Paul could make a twofold appeal: (1) to Old Testament Scripture; and (2) to the established facts connected with the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord. To the Gentiles he could make no appeals to Scripture testimony, seeing that they had no written revelation; but even to them St. Paul could make a twofold appeal: (1) to the natural sense of religion, of which their idolatries gave witness; and (2) to the circle of recognized facts connected with the manifestation of Christ in the flesh. Still our appeal to men is based on (1) the religious nature; (2) the older revelation; (3) the historical facts of Christ's life. St. Paul "preached the gospel as a herald. Yes, but he preached it also by long arguments, intended and constructed to produce faith or persuasion concerning Christ. Indeed, the Greek word originally means to carry on an argument by way of dialogue; question by the hearer, answer by the preacher, according to his light. That was the real apostolic method of serving Christ—a very eager, earnest, inevitable method. To preach Christ is to 'reason out of the Scriptures' and, in a secondary degree, out of the great book of human life and experience, and also out of the great book of material nature; but in any case it is to 'reason,' to lay out, the matter as it seems to ourselves—to press it home upon all whom it concerns; to remonstrate, expostulate, entreat, and then to leave the issue with God." Fix attention on St. Paul's three points.

**I. MESSIAH MUST SUFFER.** Compare our Lord's teaching to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 25, 26). This suffering of their expected Messiah was the point of Old Testament teaching which the Jews missed or resisted. It is in the old Scriptures, in psalm and prophecy, plainly enough; but the conception of the Messiah as a national Deliverer and conquering King had so possessed the minds of the people that the prophetic figures of suffering were willingly turned aside, referred to some other individual, or assumed to have been exhausted in the troubles of the writers. Yet the first promise made to men after the Fall gives hint of redemption by suffering (see especially Ps. xxii.; Isa. liii.; and the Book of Lamentations). Explain the influence which the writings of Daniel and the conflicts of the Maccabean princes had upon the national sentiment. And yet in this necessity for Messiah's sufferings is declared the distinction between a temporal and a spiritual Saviour. Christ's weapons are not carnal. Of moral weapons none are mightier than suffering, and few can be used without involving suffering. The necessity for Christ's suffering may be shown (1) in his humiliation to man's nature; (2) in his sympathy with man's disabilities; (3) in his bearing of man's burden. There was both suffering of feeling and suffering of circumstances.

**II. MESSIAH MUST RISE.** Of this the older Scriptures give witness. The kind of passages which the apostles took to prove this position are found in St. Peter's first sermons; and the necessity may be shown (1) in that the acceptance by God of his life and work on earth must in some way be attested, and (2) in that we must have good ground of persuasion that Christ is alive and able to continue the good work which he has begun on earth. A Saviour for men who was held fast in the death-grip plainly could not deliver man from death, the worst of his foes. Such a seeming Saviour could not win our confidence, for it would appear to us that he was defeated at last. And, besides, we cannot trust a thing, a work; we must trust a person who has worked and can work, and therefore Messiah must rise from the dead and be alive for evermore.

**III. MESSIAH IS JESUS OF NAZARETH.** The things found to be necessary are met in him, and in him alone. Show the correspondence between the facts of the Christian teaching and the requirements of Scripture prophecy, and impress the personal demand which St. Paul makes to follow on his argument; then your loyalty, your trust, your love, your life, are demanded for Jesus Messiah.—R. T.

**Ver. 11.—*The nobility of the inquiring spirit.*** The people of Berea are commended for their disposition to inquire and search into the truth of Christianity as it was taught to them by the apostolic missionaries. They were not the slaves of prejudice. "With a quick and clear intelligence they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether they really did speak of a Christ who should suffer and rise again. The Berean converts have naturally been regarded, especially among those who urge the duty or claim the right of private judgment, as a representative instance of the right relations of reason and faith, occupying a middle position between credulity and scepticism." The attitudes of men towards truth, as freshly revealed, or as revealed in fresh forms, are threefold: (1) some are wilfully antagonistic; (2) some are weakly receptive; (3) some are intelligently sceptical. The word "scepticism" may be used in a good as well as in a bad sense. It properly stands for that disposition to question and doubt which is one of the features of the thoughtful and inquiring mind.

**I. SCEPTICISM AS DEPENDENT ON NATURAL DISPOSITION.** There are, in respect of this spirit, marked diversities in nations and in races. And there are answering differences in families and in individuals. Usually the sceptical spirit is found in men rather than in women, who are as remarkable for their receptivity as men for their tendency to criticism. The beginnings of what will afterwards appear as scepticism are found in children. Some will question the why and wherefore of everything that is told them, while others will open wide eyes, and take in as real, the strangest fairy tales that can be told them. A great part of the responsibility of parents and teachers lies in the need for culturing—cultivating or restraining—the early signs of the sceptical spirit. Where the sceptical spirit is unduly developed the corrective spirit of faith must be nourished; and where credulity is excessive, the mind must be quickened to doubt. Ministers need to remember that both classes are found in their congregations, and that both classes have to be wisely led to intelligent faith.

**II. SCEPTICISM AS FOSTERED BY INTELLECTUAL PRIDE.** This is one of the gravest difficulties of our age, in which remarkable advances in knowledge have been made. Those advances have chiefly borne relation to the sphere of the physical sciences, and in that sphere pride is readily nourished, because, apparently, all depends on men's own observation and research. It becomes easy for men to say—What we observe and know is the truth; and there is no other truth than "truth of fact." So we find all around us much scepticism in relation to the moral, spiritual, revelational spheres: a disposition to unreasonable doubt; to doubting for doubting's sake. This needs to be wisely but firmly rebuked, and its real source, in mere pride of intellect, should be pointed out. The physical is not the only sphere through which God has revealed himself to his creatures; and it never can be a sign of human wisdom that the best three parts of God's revelation are set aside as the dreams of dreamers.

**III. SCEPTICISM AS A RESULT OF ASSOCIATIONS.** As a disposition of mind, scepticism takes a place among infectious mental diseases, communicated very readily by association. A sceptical workman will infect his fellows. A sceptical student will change the tone of his college. A sceptical member of a family will destroy the reciprocity of a whole family. So we, who have any kind of trust of others, need to be watchful over the influence of such persons. A minister's influence in a congregation may be seriously resisted by the power among the people of one unreasonably critical and sceptical member. He will look with high hope on every sign of the Berean spirit, the spirit of intelligent inquiry and research, but he has fewer things that call for his watchful care than the infection of the sceptical spirit, which will at once impair his influence as a Christian teacher. And the association of books of a prevailing critical and unbelieving character will be found quite as dangerous as that of sceptical persons.

**IV. SCEPTICISM AS AN IMPULSE TO INQUIRY.** This is its good side; and in this the example of the Bereans is commended to us. It is the spirit that seeks for two things: (1) comprehension, or the distinct, clear, and intelligent understanding of any

teachings; and (2) verification, or adequate and reasonable grounds for belief. But it is characteristic of intelligent inquiry that it seeks its proofs within the spheres of its subjects. If it inquires concerning physical principles, it seeks for proof and illustration in physical facts. If its sphere be moral or spiritual, it asks for moral or spiritual reason and proof. So the Bereans did not confuse the spheres and domains of inquiry. The matter was one of prophetic revelation and of answering historical fact, and therefore their inquiries concerned (1) the actual contents of the revelation, and (2) the credibility of the witnesses to the historical facts.

Conclude by showing the relations of scepticism to faith. The noble man, the intelligent believer, must have won faith out of scepticism—in the sense of humble and earnest inquiry. Those who are simply receptive have their mission in the world, and we desire to institute no unworthy, no discouraging comparisons; but for the active forms of Christian work, and for the emergencies of the Christian conflict, those are needed who have won faith out of fight. The Bereans are commended because they doubted and inquired; and yet this is the very thing which many nowadays would have feared. But one thing made *their* inquiries so safe—they led them to the Scriptures, and to the searching of God's revealed Word.—R. T.

Vers. 19—21.—*The passion for something new.* Demosthenes said, in one of his speeches, "Tell me, is it all you care for, to go about up and down the market, asking each other, 'Is there any news?'" The restless inquisitiveness of the Athenian character had all along been proverbial. It did not alone distinguish the Athenians, though it gained a peculiar prominence in their case. It has returned upon man in such power, now that telegraphs and newspapers bind the nations together, that it may profitably be made the subject of Christian meditation.

I. IT SOMETIMES COMES TO BE A DISEASE. A mental disease. A restlessness that we see illustrated in some children, who tire at once of their toys and crave for something new. We see it in the world of fashion, in which garments are speedily set aside, and the last new colour, or shape, or material is eagerly sought. It is equally shown in the passion for the newest books, the last newspaper, the freshest opinion, the present excitement. It even afflicts Christian people, who in a crowd run after the newest revivalist, and cry for the latest novelty in doctrine or in Church method. It is a kind of feverish delirium, which pall the appetite, vitiates the taste, and makes patient continuance in well-doing impossible. It needs to be treated as a disease, and its influence in a family, in social life, and in the Church needs to be carefully checked. It is not progress that is usually sought, because true progress ever goes slowly; it is mere novelty that is sought. We may generally say that "the old is better."

II. IT IS ONE OF THE SIGNS OF OVERDONE CIVILIZATION. It is a marked feature of a nation that is struggling up into civilization, that all its members must be workers, and none can be kept in idleness. To such a nation *mere news* is the amusement of its resting leisure hours; it cannot be the sober business of its days. But when nations have long reached the high levels of civilization, wealth has increased, multitudes can live in idleness, and, having nothing better to do, they may run after the latest stranger in art, or science, or music, or politics, or religion, and gathering round him say, "May we know what this new doctrine is, whereof thou speakest?" This is well illustrated in the case of the Athenians, who were surfeited with art and philosophy and superstitious religion. A city full of wealthy idlers, no doubt of good taste and cultured minds, who had nothing better to do than to run after the last new thing. The antidote for this evil is the preaching of the responsibility resting on every man to be a worker, and a worker for the general welfare. Nobody has any right to food and life save as they work, in some good way, for it. Workers soon get interest enough to stop their yearning for "something new." Illustrate how these things may be applied to Church life. *Church work* is the great remedy for the hindering passion for novelty.

III. YET IT IS AN INDICATION OF THE UNIVERSAL ASPIRATION FOR IMMORTALITY. There is good in it; the evil of it lies (1) in the forms it takes, and (2) in the excessive degrees of its exercise. That something in us all which cannot rest, which must seek for something more; which rises up above all bondages and limitations; which is as

• An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light; "



is but the aspiration of souls made in the image of God, who cry for permanence, for holiness, for rest, for God, and "can find no rest until they find rest in him." We must seek after something new, on and on, until we find God. And Scripture inspires us to such seeking; for it assures us that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath the heart of man conceived, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And though, in measure, these have been revealed unto us by the Spirit, yet again we are led on by the Word; for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—R. T.

Ver. 23.—"*The unknown God.*" For description of the statues and altars to various divinities with which Athens was crowded, see Conybeare and Howson, 'Life and Epistles of St. Paul,' vol. i. pp. 415—417. "Roman satirists say, 'It was easier to find a god in Athens than a man.' Athenian religion ministered to art and amusement, and was entirely destitute of moral power. Taste and excitement alone were gratified. A religion which addresses itself only to the taste is as weak as one that appeals only to the intellect." In illustration of the altar to which St. Paul here alludes, Aulus Gellius says, "The ancient Romans, when alarmed by an earthquake, were accustomed to pray, not to a specified divinity, but to a god expressed in vague language, as avowedly unknown." For further illustration, see the Expository portion of this work; and 'Commentary for English Readers,' *in loc.* We now fix attention on—

I. THE CONFUSIONS OF POLYTHEISM. Its worshippers can never be quite sure that they have propitiated the right god, seeing that gods are supposed to be related to particular places, nations, events, sins, etc. This confusion tends to create a more and more elaborate ritual, and a wearisome round of ceremonies. All gods who may possibly be related to the matter in hand must be propitiated, and then the right one may be missed.

II. THE RESTFULNESS OF MONOTHEISM. One God stands related to all nature, to all events, to all ages, to all sins; and if we can know him and secure right relations with him, there is no one else to fear, no one else to come on us with claims. Behind God there is nobody and nothing. Rest in him is rest for ever.

III. THE FULL SATISFACTION OF THE ONE GOD KNOWN IN CHRIST. "Manifest in the flesh." Show how men in seeking after God want some *form* under which they may present him to their minds. This necessity is the secret cause of all idol-making. And God has graciously met it, and fully satisfied it, by presenting to us himself, apprehended as the "Man Christ Jesus." And this incarnation of the one and only God St. Paul preached to the Athenians. The name of the "unknown God" is Jesus, the Christ.—R. T.

Ver. 23.—*Athenian religion.* "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." The materials for an introduction are found in the following suggestive passage from F. D. Maurice:—"This language assumed that the Athenians were in search of God; that they were ignorantly worshipping him; that they had a sense of his being a Father; that they wanted some one living human image of him, to supplant those images of him which they had made for themselves. . . . This teaching was adapted to all that was true and sound in the Greek mind. The Greek asked for one who should exhibit humanity in its perfection; and he was told of the Son of man. He felt that whoever did so exhibit humanity must be Divine. The Son of man was declared to be the Son of God. He had dreamed of one from whom the highest glory man could conceive must have proceeded. He was told of the Father. He had thought of a Divine presence in every tree and flower. He heard of a presence nearer still to himself." We may learn from St. Paul's speech how we ought to think of the Gentile nations of the earth, and what it lies upon us to do on their behalf. He shows us what "gospel"—what "good news of God"—has to be taken to the nations; and, by his example, he indicates in what spirit the message should be taken. Speaking amidst the surroundings of idol altars, statues, and temples, St. Paul—

I. RECOGNIZES THE RELIGIOUSNESS OF THE ATHENIANS. He was placed in a position of exceeding difficulty. To have attacked those pagan divinities in the very midst of their sanctuaries and altars, and before the very court which guarded the national

religion, would have closed the ears of his audience to any message which he might deliver, and might have put him in some personal danger. In his speech he heartily recognizes the worshipping instinct; he sees the dissatisfaction with all existing forms of worship which indicates an aching and yearning of soul to know the full truth of God. To the unrest which the strangely inscribed altar revealed, he made his appeal. He does not attempt to break down their confidence in Zeus, Athene, or their companion divinities. He appeals to the want which no mere deification of human attributes or powers of nature could possibly satisfy. St. Paul admits a real worship in paganism. He admits that the incompleteness and imperfectness of the worship followed from their ignorance. He attempts to guide the worshipping faculty aright, by instructing their understandings, and by declaring positive truths of Divine revelation.

II. THE APOSTLE PLAINLY MARKS THE ERRORS OF THE ATHENIANS. He does not hesitate to say, "ignorantly worship," even to those who prided themselves on their learning. He accepts their own confession that they did not know the God to whom they raised their altar. They were wrong in their cherished conceptions of God, and wrong in the worship they offered to him. They lowered the very idea of God, by likening him to mere man-made images of gold and silver. They offered *things* to one who, being a Father, cared for *hearts*, and for things only as they carried messages of love and trust. The sacrifices of the true God are a "broken and a contrite heart," and they who "worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth." Three conceptions of God are essential as the foundations of true doctrine and true worship.

1. *His unity*. "There is no God but God."
2. *His spirituality*. "God is a Spirit."
3. *His righteousness*. He has been called, and the name has in it good suggestion, "The Eternal who makes for righteousness."

III. THE APOSTLE DECLARES THE TRUTH WHICH THE ATHENIANS MISSED. "Him declare I unto you." We may briefly summarize his presentation of the gospel revelation, as adapted to the Athenians. 1. He announces God to be a personal Being. no mere force, like the sunlight or the evening breeze. No mere quality or virtue, such as they deified, raising altars to fame, to modesty, to energy, to persuasion, and to pity. God is living. He is one. He is the Source of all life, all breath, all being. You cannot imprison God in a statue, even though you may mould it of priceless gold. You cannot enshrine God in a temple, however gorgeous it may be. 2. Then St. Paul explains God's seeming indifference to men through the long ages. It was a mystery, but only the mystery of patient, forbearing love, which waited until the children put all their souls into the cry for him. 3. And, finally, he tells them that the waiting-time is quite past, and the great Father has come to the children now, asking their trust and their love. And the Father's nearness is to be apprehended through the human manifestation of his Son. "He preached unto them Jesus."—R. T.

Vers. 28, 29.—*God's offspring*. "For we are also his offspring." The source whence St. Paul derived this quotation is given in the Exegetical portion of this Commentary. It may be well to point out how such a classical quotation would secure the sustained attention of his audience. Dean Plumptre suggestively remarks, "The method of St. Paul's teaching is one from which modern preachers might well learn a lesson. He does not begin by telling men that they have thought too highly of themselves, that they are vile worms, creatures of the dust, children of the devil. The fault which he finds in them is that they have taken too low an estimate of their position. They too had forgotten that they were God's offspring, and had counted themselves, even as the unbelieving Jews had done (ch. xiii. 46), 'unworthy of eternal life.'" The truth set before us in the text is that of the fatherly relation of God to all men, and the answering child-relation of all men to God.

I. THE FACT SEEN IN ITS UNIVERSALITY. It is commonly assumed that St. Paul meant no more than to remind his audience that there was only one Creator, and that all men were made in his image. But he must have further designed (1) to reveal God to them; (2) to give them the best of names for him; (3) and to awaken in them the sense of his universal claims to love and trust.

II. THE RELATIONS OF SON AND FATHER THUS INVOLVED. These cannot be made by Christ; they belong to us, and are the very conditions of our being. 1. Christ does enable us to recognize the relation. 2. He does restore it as a broken relation. 3.

He does show the glory of the relation in his own human life. 4. He does help us, by his grace and Spirit, to meet and fulfil the claims of the relation. "Because we are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts."

III. THE ARGUMENT FOR THE SPIRITUALITY OF GOD THUS INDICATED. Work out and illustrate: 1. That a thing can never be superior to its maker. If God made us, he must be better than we are, and we are manifestly better than speechless statues. 2. Man, the son, is a spiritual being; then God, the Father, must be spiritual too.

IV. THE CLAIMS OF GOD ON MEN THUS ENFORCED. Fatherhood means authority. What God commands we must heed. He commands two things. 1. That we should repent. 2. That we should receive his gift of eternal life in Christ. "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1.—*He* for *Paul*, A.V. and T.R. After these things, etc. No hint is given by St. Luke as to the length of Paul's sojourn at Athens. But as the double journey of the Bereans, who accompanied him to Athens, back to Berea, and of Timothy from Berea to Athens, amounted to above five hundred miles (Lewin, p. 268), we cannot suppose it to have been less than a month; and it may have been a good deal more. His reasonings in the synagogue with the Jews and devout Greeks, apparently on successive sabbaths, his daily disputations in the Agora, apparently not begun till after he had "waited" some time for Silas and Timothy, the knowledge he had acquired of the numerous temples and altars at Athens, and the phrase with which this chapter begins, all indicate a stay of some length. Came to Corinth. If by land, a forty miles' or two days' journey, through Eleusis and Megara; if by sea, a day's sail. Lewin thinks he came by sea, and that it was in winter, and that possibly one of the shipwrecks mentioned in 2 Cor. xi. 25 may have occurred at this time. Corinth, at this time a Roman colony, the capital of the province of Achaia, and the residence of the proconsul. It was a great commercial city, the centre of the trade of the Levant, and consequently a great resort of the Jews. It had a very large Greek population. Ancient Corinth had been destroyed by Mummius, surnamed Achaicus, B.C. 146, and remained waste (*éphun*) many years. Julius Cæsar founded a Roman colony on the old site (Howson), "consisting principally of freedmen, among whom were great numbers of the Jewish race." Corinth, as a Roman colony, had its *duumviri*, as appears by coins of the reign of Claudius (Lewin, p. 271).

Ver. 2.—*He found for found*, A.V.; *a man of Pontus by race for born in Pontus*, A.V.; *because for because that*, A.V.; *the Jews for Jews*, A.V.; *he came for came*, A.V.

Aquila A Roman name, Græcized into *Ἀκίλλας*. Knights and tribunes and others of the name occur in Roman history. Whether the Jewish family residing in Pontus took the name of Aquila from any of these Romans is not known. Aquila, the translator of the Old Testament into Greek about A.D. 130, was also a Jew of Pontus, the old kingdom of Mithridates. That there was a considerable colony of Jews in Pontus appears also from 1 Pet. i. 1 and ch. ii. 9. Priscilla. Also called *Prisca* (2 Tim. iv. 19). So in classical authors, *Livia* and *Livilla*, *Drusa* and *Drusilla*, are used of the same persons (Howson, p. 415). Prisca is a not uncommon name for Roman women. The masculine Priscus occurs very frequently. Aquila and Priscilla were among the most active Christians, and the most devoted friends of St. Paul (vers. 18, 26; Rom. xvi. 3, 4, 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; 2 Tim. iv. 19); and were evidently persons of culture as well as piety. Lately; *προσφάτως* (*i.e.* πρόσφατον, Pindar, etc.), only found here in the New Testament. But it occurs in the LXX. of Deut. xxiv. 5 and Ezek. xi. 3, and in the apocryphal books repeatedly, and in Polybius. The adjective *πρόσφατος*, which is also used by the LXX. and the Apocrypha and in classical Greek for "new," is used only once in the New Testament, in Heb. x. 20. It means properly "newly killed," hence anything "recent," "fresh," or "new." Both the adjective and the adverb are very common in medical writings. Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome. Suetonius mentions the fact, but unfortunately does not say in what year of Claudius's reign it took place. His account is that, in consequence of frequent disturbances and riots among the Jews at the instigation of Chrestus, Claudius drove them from Rome. It seems almost certain, as Renan says, especially combining Tacitus's account ('Annal.' xv. 44) of the spread of Christianity in the city of Rome before the time of Nero, that Chrestus (Greek *Χρηστός*) is only a corruption of the name Christ,



similar to that found on three or four inscriptions before the time of Constantine, where Christians are called *Χριστιανοί*, and to the formation of the French word *Chrétien*—in old French *Chrestien*; and that the true account of these riots is that they were attacks of the unbelieving Jews upon Christian Jews, similar to those at Jerusalem (ch. viii.), at Antioch in Pisidia (ch. xiii. 50), at Iconium and Lystra (ch. xiv.), and at Thessalonica and Berea (ch. xvii.). The Romans did not discriminate between Jews and Christian Jews, and thought that those who called Christ their King were fighting under his leadership (comp. ch. xvii. 7; Luke xxiii. 2; see Renan, 'St. Paul,' p. 101). Tertullian and Lactantius (quoted by Lewin, p. 274) both speak of the vulgar pronunciation, *Chrestianus* and *Chrestus*. Howson also adopts the above explanation. But Meyer thinks that Chrestus was, as Suetonius says, a Jewish leader of insurrection at Rome. The question bears on the passage before us chiefly as the solution does or does not prove the existence of Christians at Rome at this time, and affects the probability of Aquila and Priscilla being already Christians when they came to Corinth, before they made St. Paul's acquaintance.

Ver. 3.—*Trade for craft, A.V.; they wrought for (he) wrought, A.V. and T.R.; trade for occupation, A.V. (τέχνη).* Of the same trade; *οὐότεχνον*. This word occurs here only in the New Testament, but is of frequent use in Hippocrates, Dioscorides, and Galen (Hobart, as before). Tent-makers; *σκηνοποιοί*, which is paraphrased by Chrysostom and Theodoret. Hug and others erroneously interpret it "makers of tent-cloth," from the fact that a certain kind of cloth made of goats' hair, called *καλίκιον*, was manufactured in Paul's native country of Cilicia. But the fact of such manufacture would equally lead persons who were living in Cilicia to exercise the trade of making tents of the cloth so manufactured. St. Paul alludes to his manual labour in ch. xx. 33—35; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.

Ver. 4.—*Jews and Greeks for the Jews and the Greeks, A.V.* Observe again the influence of the synagogue upon the Greek population. Reasoned (see ch. xvii. 2, 17, note).

Ver. 5.—*But for and, A.V.; Timothy for Timotheus, A.V.; came down for were come down, A.V.; constrained by the Word for pressed in spirit, A.V. and T.R.; testifying for and testified, A.V.; the Christ for Christ, A.V.* When Silas and Timothy, etc. It is probable that Silas had returned by St. Paul's directions to Berea, and Timothy to

Thessalonica from Athens. If there were extant a letter of Paul to the Bereans, it would probably mention his sending back Silas to them, just as the Epistle to the Thessalonians mentions his sending Timothy to them. Now they both come to Corinth from Macedonia, which includes Berea and Thessalonica. If they came by sea, they would probably sail together from Dium to Cenchreae (see ch. xvii. 14, note). Was constrained by the Word. As an English phrase, this is almost destitute of meaning. If the R.T. is right, and it has very strong manuscript authority, the words *συνέχετο τῷ λόγῳ* mean that he was seized, taken possession of, and as it were bound by the necessity of preaching the Word, constrained as it were to preach more earnestly than ever. In St. Luke *συνεχέσθαι* is a medical term: in Luke iv. 28, R.T., "Holden wit'a great fever;" Luke viii. 37, "Holden wit'a great fear;" ch. xxviii. 8, "Sick of fever and dysentery;" and so frequently in medical writers ('Medical Language of St. Luke,' Hobart). But it is worth considering whether *συνέχετο* is not in the middle voice, with the sense belonging to *συνεχής*, i.e. "continuous," "unbroken," and so that the phrase means that, after the arrival of Silas and Timothy, St. Paul gave himself up to continuous preaching. St. Luke has not unfrequently a use of words peculiar to himself. The Vulgate rendering, *instabat verbo*, seems so to understand it. It was probably soon after the arrival of Silas and Timothy that St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 1; iii. 1, 2, 6). The Second Epistle followed some time before St. Paul left Corinth. If the T.R., *τῷ πνεύματι*, is right, it must be construed, "constrained by the Spirit," in accordance with Greek usage. Testifying, etc. Note how different St. Paul's preaching in the synagogue was from his preaching in the Areopagus.

Ver. 6.—*Shook out for shook, A.V.* For this action of shaking his raiment comp. ch. xiii. 51. It was in accordance with our Lord's direction in Matt. x. 14, where the same word (*ἐκτινύσασθαι*) is used. It is "much employed in medical language" (Hobart, 'Medical Language of St. Luke,' p. 240). The idea seems to be having nothing henceforth in common with them. Your blood, etc. (see Ezek. xxxiii. 4—9). St. Paul's keen sense of the perverseness of the Jews breaks out in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians (ii. 14—16), written about this time. See note to ver. 5.

Ver. 7.—*Went for entered, A.V.; the house of a certain man for a certain man's house, A.V.; Titus Justus for Justus, A.V. and T.R.* Thence. Clearly from the synagogue, where he had been preaching to the Jews, not

from Aquila's house, as Alford and others. It does not appear to be a question here of where Paul lodged, but where he preached. Justus had probably a large room, which he gave Paul the use of for his sabbath and other meetings. As Howson truly says, he continued to "lodge" (μένειν) with Aquila and Priscilla. It is only said that he "came" (ἦλθεν) to the house of Justus from the synagogue. So Renan, "*Il enseigne désormais dans la maison de Titius Justus*" (p. 216). One that worshipped God (σεβομένου τὸν Θεόν); i.e. a Greek proselyte of the gate (see ch. xiii. 43, 50; xvi. 14; xvii. 4, 17, etc.). Cornelius is called εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν Θεόν. Whose house, etc. Either his proximity to the synagogue had led to his attending there, or, being already a proselyte, he had taken a house hard by for the convenience of attending. Joined hard; ἦν συνομοροῦσα, found only here either in the New Testament or elsewhere. Ὁμορῶς occurs in Plutarch; συνόμορος is also a word (Steph., 'Thesaur.').

Ver. 8.—*Ruler for chief ruler*, A.V. (ἀρχισυνάγωγος, as in ch. xiii. 15); *in for on*, A.V. Crispus (a common Roman name) was one of the very few whom St. Paul himself baptized, probably on account of his important position as ruler of the synagogue, as we learn from 1 Cor. i. 14. With all his house (comp. ch. xvi. 33, 34). Many of the Corinthians; i.e. of the Greeks and Romans, who composed the population of the city. It is seldom that we have the names of so many converts preserved as we have of this Achaian mission. Besides Crispus and Gaius, we know of Epānetus and Stephanas, who would seem to have been converted together (Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 15); and probably also Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor. xvi. 17). Gaius, from his name (Caius) and his salutation to the Church at Rome, was probably a Roman. Fortunatus and Achaicus also belonged, perhaps, to the Roman colony. Here too were many heathen converts (1 Cor. xii. 2), though mostly of the lower rank (1 Cor. i. 26—29).

Ver. 9.—*And the Lord said unto for then spake the Lord to*, A.V. A vision (ὄραμα); literally, a thing seen, but always used of a wonderful "sight:" Matt. xvii. 9 of the Transfiguration, ch. vii. 31 of the burning bush. But more commonly of a "vision," as in ch. ix. 10, 12; x. 3, 17, 19; xi. 5; xii. 9; xvi. 9. So in the LXX. (Gen. xli. 2, etc.). St. Paul received a similar gracious token of the Lord's watchful care of him soon after his conversion (ch. xxii. 17—21). He tells us that then he was in an "ecstasy," or trance. The ἑκστασις describes the mental condition of the person who sees an ὄραμα.

Ver. 10.—*Harm for hurt*, A.V. I have

much people, etc. We may infer from this intimation from him who "knoweth them that are his," which led to St. Paul staying on at Corinth upwards of a year and six months (ver. 11), that the shortness of his stay at Athens was because the Lord had not much people there. For the encouraging promise of protection in the midst of danger given to St. Paul by Christ in this vision, comp. Jer. i. 17—19.

Ver. 11.—*Dwelt for continued*, A.V. Dwelt; literally, *sat down*, as ch. xiii. 14, etc., and hence to "remain quietly" (Luke xxiv. 49). A year and six months. It is not clear whether these eighteen months are to be measured to the end of St. Paul's stay at Corinth, or only to the rising up of the Jews related in vers. 12—17. Renan is doubtful. Howson does not go into the question. But Lewin rightly measures the eighteen months down to Gallio's arrival. And so does Meyer, who also notices the force of ἐκδίδωρε, as indicating a quiet, undisturbed abode, and calls special attention to the ἐν of ver. 18, as showing that the "many days" there mentioned were *additional* to the year and a half of ver. 11. The only longer residence we know of was that of three years at Ephesus (ch. xx. 31).

Ver. 12.—*But for and*, A.V.; *proconsul for the deputy*, A.V.; *with one accord rose up for made insurrection with one accord*, A.V.; *before for to*, A.V. Gallio. Marcus Annæus Novatus took the name of Lucius Junius Annæus Gallio, on account of his adoption by L. Junius Gallio. He was the elder brother of Seneca, and a man of ability, and of a most amiable temper and disposition. His brother Seneca said that he had not a fault, and that everybody loved him. He was called "Dulcis Gallio" by Statius. It is unfortunately not known exactly in what year Gallio became either Consul or Proconsul of Achaia. Had it been known, it would have been invaluable for fixing the chronology of St. Paul's life. Lewin puts it (his proconsulate) in the year A.D. 53, and so does Renan; Howson, between A.D. 52 and A.D. 54. The circumstantial evidence from secular writers corroborating St. Luke's account is exceedingly curious. There is no account extant either of his consulate or of his proconsulate of Achaia. But Pliny, speaking of the medicinal effect of a sea-voyage on persons in consumption, gives as an example, "as I remember was the case with Annæus Gallio after his consulate," and seems to imply that he went to Egypt for the sake of the long sea-voyage; which would suit very well his going there from his government in Achaia (Pliny, 'Nat. Hist.,' xxxi. cap. vi. 33). And that his proconsulate was in Achaia is corroborated

by a chance quotation in Seneca's Epistle 104, of a saying of "my lord Gallio, when he had a fever in Achaia and immediately went on board ship," where the phrase "domini mei," applied to his own brother, seems also to indicate his high rank. Profane history also shuts up the probable date of Gallio's proconsulate between the year A.D. 49 and the year A.D. 65 or 66, in which he died. There is a diversity of accounts as to his death. Ernesti, in his note on Tacitus, 'Annal.,' xv. lxxiii., where Tacitus speaks of him as frightened at the death of his brother Seneca, and a suppliant for his own life, says, "quem Nero post interfecit," and refers to Dion Cassius, 58, 18, and Eusebius. But Dion is there speaking of Junius Gallio in the reign of Tiberius, not of our Gallio at all; though afterwards, speaking of the death of Seneca, he says, "and his brothers also were killed after him" (62, 25).<sup>1</sup> As for Eusebius, the passage quoted<sup>2</sup> is not found in the Greek or Armenian copies of the 'Chronicon,' but only in the Latin of Jerome. But, as Scaliger points out, there is a manifest blunder here, because the 'Chronicon' places the death of Gallio two years before that of Seneca, whereas we know from Tacitus that Gallio was alive after his brother's death. Moreover, the description "egregius declamator" clearly applies to Junius Gallio the rhetorician, and not to Gallio his adopted son. Though, therefore, Renan says, "Comme son frère il eut l'honneur sous Néron d'expié par la mort sa distinction et son honnêteté" ('St. Paul,' p. 222), if we give due weight to the silence of Tacitus, it is very doubtful whether he died a violent death at all. St. Luke, as usual, is most accurate in calling him proconsul. Achaia had been recently made a senatorial province by Claudius. For ἀνθύπατος, see ch. xiii. 7, 8, 12; xix. 38. The verb occurs only here in the New Testament. The term *deputy* was adopted in the A.V. doubtless from that being the title of the Viceroy of Ireland, and other officers who exercise a deputed authority, just as the proconsul was in the place of the consul. Rose up against; κατεπέστησαν, one of Luke's peculiar words, found neither in the New Testament

nor in the LXX., nor in classical writers (Steph., 'Thesaur.'). The judgment-seat (see note to ver. 12).

Ver. 13.—*Man for fellow*, A.V. The A.V. was intended to express the contemptuous feeling often implied in *oĩtros* (Luke xxiii. 2; Matt. xii. 24; ch. v. 28, etc.). Contrary to the Law; meaning, as it naturally would in the mouth of a Jew, the Law of Moses. Hence Gallio's answer in ver. 15, "If it be a question . . . of your Law, look ye to it." The very phrase, to "worship God," had a technical sense (see above, ver. 7). Paul, they said, profess'd to make proselytes, and encouraged them to break the Law.

Ver. 14.—*But for and*, A.V.; *about for now about*, A.V.; *if indeed for if*, A.V.; *of wicked villainy for wicked lewdness*, A.V. The Greek *ῥαδιούργημα* occurs only here in the New Testament or elsewhere; *ῥαδιουργία*, which is not uncommon in Greek writers, occurs in ch. xiii. 10.

Ver. 15.—*They are questions about for it be a question of*, A.V. and T.R.; *your own for of your*, A.V., an unnecessary change; *look to it yourselves for look ye to it*, A.V.; *I am not minded to be a for for I will be no*, A.V. and T.R.; *these for such*, A.V.

Ver. 16.—*And he drave them*; ἀπέλασεν, found only here in the New Testament or LXX. But it is used by Demosthenes and Plutarch in exactly the same connection: ἀπὸ τοῦ συνεδρίου: ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος (Demosthenes, 1373, 12; Plutarch, 'Marcell.,' p. 410, in Schleusner). It implies the ignominious dismissal of the case, without its being even tried. The judgment-seat (βῆμα); the proconsular place of judgment. The βῆμα (here and ver. 12) was properly the "raised space," or "tribune," on which, in the case of a consul, proconsul, or prætor, the *sella curulis* was placed on which he sat and gave judgment. It was usually a kind of apse to the basilica. In Matt. xxvii. 19; John xix. 13, and, indeed, here and elsewhere, it seems to be used, generally, for the judgment-seat itself (see ch. xxv. 10).

Ver. 17.—*And they all laid hold on for then all the Greeks took*, A.V. and T.R.; *ruler for chief ruler*, A.V., as ver. 8. The R.T. has far more manuscript support than either the T.R. or another reading, which has "Jews" instead of "Greeks." All means all the crowd of bystanders and lookers-on, mostly, no doubt, Greeks. The Jews, always unpopular, would be sure to have the Corinthian rabble against them as soon as the proconsul drove them from the judgment-seat. Sosthenes. There is no probability whatever that he is the same person as the Sosthenes of 1 Cor. i. 1. The name was very common. He appears to have succeeded Crispus as ruler of the synagogue, and

<sup>1</sup> This is corroborated by Tacitus as far as one brother, Annæus Mella, the father of the poet Lucan, is concerned, but not as regards Gallio.

<sup>2</sup> "Junius Annæus Gallio, frater Senecæ, egregius declamator, propriâ se manu interfecit, mortem ejus Nerone in suam presentiam differente" ('Eusebii Pamp. Chronic. Lib. Posterior Interpr. Hieronymo,' p. 161 of Scaliger's edition, under the number mm|xxx.)



would be likely, therefore, to be especially hostile to Paul.

Ver. 18.—*Having tarried after this yet many days for after this tarried there yet a good while, and then, A.V.; for for into, A.V.; Cenchræ for Cenchrea, A.V.* Took his leave; ἀποταξάμενος, here and again in ver. 21. This is a somewhat peculiar use of the word, which occurs also in Luke ix. 61 and 2 Cor. ii. 13 (see too Mark vi. 46). It is used in the same sense in Josephus ('Ant. Jud.,' xi. viii. 6). In a metaphorical sense it means "to renounce," "to bid adieu to" (Luke xiv. 23). Of the six times it occurs in the New Testament, four are in St. Luke's writings and one in St. Paul's. With him Priscilla and Aquila, having shorn his head in Cenchræ, etc. There is great diversity of opinion as to whether it was St. Paul or Aquila who had the vow.<sup>1</sup> Meyer thinks that the mention of Priscilla before Aquila, contrary to the order in ver. 2 and in ver. 26 (where, however, the R.T. reads "*Priscilla and Aquila*"), is a clear indication that Luke meant the words κείραμενος, κ.τ.λ., to refer to Aquila, not to St. Paul, and Howson takes the same view. But this is a very weak argument, refuted at once by Rom. xvi. 3 and 2 Tim. iv. 19, as well as by the whole run of the passage, in which Paul is throughout the person spoken of; or, as Alford puts it, in the consecutive narrative from ver. 18 to ver. 25 there are *nine* aorist participles, of which eight apply to Paul, as the subject of the section, making it scarcely doubtful that the ninth applies to him likewise. Moreover, there is no conceivable reason why the vow should be mentioned if it was taken by Aquila, and, what is still more conclusive, the person who went to Jerusalem, i.e. Paul, must be the one who had the vow, not the person who stayed behind, i.e. Aquila. In fact, nobody would ever have thought of making Aquila the subject if it were not for the thought that there is an incongruity with Paul's character in his making a vow of that kind. But we must take what we find in Scripture, and not force it to speak our own thoughts. As regards the nature of the vow, it is not quite clear what it was. It was not the simple Nazaritic vow described in Numb. vi. 18—21; nor is the word here used by St. Luke (κείραμενος) the one which is there and elsewhere employed by the LXX., and by St. Luke himself in ch. xxi. 24, of that final shaving of the hair of the Nazarite for the purpose of offering it at the door of

the tabernacle (ἐνδῶν). It seems rather to have been of the nature of that vow which Josephus speaks of as customary for persons in any affliction, viz. to make a vow that, for thirty days previous to that on which they intend to offer sacrifice, they will abstain from wine and will shave off (ἐνυρῆσθαι) their hair, adding that Bernice was now at Jerusalem in order to perform such a vow ('Bell. Jud.,' ii. xv. 1). But it further appears, from certain passages in the Mishna, that, if any one had a Nazarite vow upon him outside the limits of the Holy Land, he could not fulfil such vow till he was come to the Holy Land, to Jerusalem; but it was allowable in such case to cut his hair short (κείρεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν), and as some say to take it with him to Jerusalem, and there offer it at the same time that he offered his sacrifice and shaved his head (ἐνυρῆσθαι).<sup>1</sup> It would seem, therefore, that either in a severe illness or under some great danger (ἀνάγκη) St. Paul had made such a vow; that he had been unwilling to cut his hair short at Corinth, where he was thrown so much into the society of Greeks, and therefore did so at Cenchræ just before he embarked for Syria; and that he made all haste to reach Jerusalem in time for the Passover, that he might there accomplish his vow (see Bishop Wordsworth's note on ch. xviii. 18; and Farrar's 'Life of St. Paul,' ii. p. 2). His motives for the vow may have been partly those described on another occasion (ch. xxi. 24), and partly his own Jewish feelings of piety showing themselves in the accustomed way. Cenchræ. The eastern port of Corinth; a considerable place. There was a Church there, doubtless founded by St. Paul during his stay at Corinth (Rom. xvi. 1).

Ver. 19.—*They came for he came, A.V. and T.R.; he left for left, A.V.* They came to Ephesus. "No voyage across the Ægean was more frequently made than that between Corinth and Ephesus. They were the capitals of the two flourishing and peaceful provinces of Achaia and Asia, and the two great mercantile towns on opposite sides of the sea" (Howson, vol. i. 454). The voyage would take from ten to fifteen days. Reasoned; διελέχθη, as in ch. xvii. 2, 17; ver. 4; xix. 8, 9; xx. 7, 9; xxiv. 25. As regards the expression, left them there, it probably arises from some actual detail which made it the natural one to use. If, for example, the synagogue was just outside the city, and Paul, parting with Aquila and Priscilla in the city, had gone off immediately to the synagogue, the phrase used would be the natural one; or the words, "he left them there," may be spoken with

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, Bede, Erasmus, Luther, Beza, Calvin, Bengel, Rosenmüller, Olshausen, Lange, Ewald, Bleek, Alford, Wordsworth, Farrar, Lewin, etc., refer it to St. Paul; the Vulgate, Hammond, Grotius, Valckenauer, Wieseler, Meyer, Howson, etc., to Aquila.

<sup>1</sup> For the difference between κείρεσθαι and ἐνυρῆσθαι, see 1 Cor. xi. 6.

reference to the main narrative, which is momentarily interrupted by the mention of St. Paul's visit to the synagogue. Note the extreme importance of this brief visit to Ephesus, where the foundation of a vigorous and flourishing Church seems to have been laid. He who knows "the times and the seasons" sent St. Paul there now, though two years before he had forbidden him to go to Asia.

Ver. 20.—*And when they asked for when they desired*, A.V.; *abide a for tarry*, A.V.; *time for time with them*, A.V. He consented not; οὐκ ἐπένευσεν, only here in the New Testament, but found in Prov. xxvi. 20; 2 Macc. iv. 10, etc., and frequently in medical writers; literally, *to bend the head forward* by the proper muscles (Hobart).

Ver. 21.—*Taking his leave of them, and saying for bade them farewell, saying*, A.V.; *I will return for I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem; but I will return*, A.V. and T.R.; *he set sail for and he sailed*, A.V. and T.R. Taking his leave; as in ver. 18, note. I must by all means, etc. This clause is not found in A, B, E, and several versions, and is omitted in the R.T. But Alford, Meyer, Wordsworth, and others consider it to be genuine. It is certainly difficult to account for such words being inserted in the text if they were not genuine; whereas it is easy to account for their omission, either by accident or from the fact that the brevity of the allusion to his visit to Jerusalem in ver. 22 might easily mislead a copyist into thinking that St. Paul did not go to Jerusalem at this time, and therefore that the words were misplaced. Observe how St. Paul's fixed purpose to reach Jerusalem as soon as possible tallies with the account of his vow. This feast (A.V.). It is not clear what feast is meant. Alford, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary,' and others, following Wieseler, think it was the Feast of Pentecost, being influenced by the consideration that sailing was dangerous and very unusual so early as before the Passover. But Meyer thinks it uncertain. But the expression, "I must by all means," would cover the risk of a voyage in the stormy season. I will return again. The fulfilment of this promise is related in ch. xix. 1, etc. If God will (see Jas. iv. 13—15).

Ver. 22.—*He went up for and gone up*, A.V.; *and went for he went*, A.V. When he had landed at Cæsarea; i.e. Cæsarea Stratonis, or Sebaste, or Παλαιός, as it was variously called, to distinguish it from Cæsarea Philippi (see ch. viii. 40; ix. 30; x. 1, etc., and frequently elsewhere in the Acts). "Cæsarea, whither probably the vessel was bound, was the military capital of the Roman province of Judæa,

of which Felix was at this time procurator. It was also the harbour by which all travellers from the West approached it, and from whence roads led to Egypt on the south, to Tyre and Sidon and Antioch on the north, and eastward to Nablous and Jerusalem and the Jordan" (Howson, i. 455). He went up and saluted the Church; meaning, without any doubt, he went up to Jerusalem, as both the word ἀναβὰς, and the object of his going up, "to salute the Church," conclusively show. For ἀναβαίνω, whether coupled with εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα as in Matt. xx. 17, 18, or standing alone as in John vii. 8, 10, and xii. 20, is the regular word for *going up* to Jerusalem (see ch. xi. 2; xv. 2; xxi. 12, 15; xxiv. 11; xxv. 1, 9); and ἡ ἐκκλησία, the Church, which Paul went to salute, can mean nothing but the mother Church of Jerusalem. No doubt he was received officially by the apostles, represented by James and the elders and the Church, as in ch. xv. 4; and gave a formal account of the result of his second missionary journey, and of the great event of the introduction of the gospel into Macedonia and Achaia. It is a remarkable example of St. Luke's great brevity at times that this is the only notice of his arrival at Jerusalem, where his vow was to be fulfilled. Went down to Antioch; from whence he had started with Silas, after his separation from Barnabas, some three years before, "being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God" (ch. xvi. 40; comp. ch. xiv. 26, 27; xv. 30).

Ver. 23.—*Having for after he had*, A.V.; *through the region for over all the country*, A.V.; *establishing for strengthening*, A.V. Having spent some time there (ch. xv. 33, note). How long we have no means of knowing; probably under six months; "quelques mois" (Renan, pp. 329, 330); "four months" (Lewin, i. 370, note; comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7; ch. xix. 22). According to Renan, Lewin, 'Speaker's Commentary,' and many others, it was at this time that the meeting with St. Peter occurred to which St. Paul refers in Gal. ii. 11, etc. And Renan ingeniously connects that perversion of the faith of the Galatians which led to St. Paul's Epistle being addressed to them, with the visit to Antioch of James's emissaries. Lewin also identifies the journey of St. Paul to Jerusalem mentioned in Gal. ii. 1 with that recorded in our ver. 22. But neither of these theories is borne out by any known facts, nor is in itself probable. There is no appearance of Barnabas or Titus being with St. Paul at this time, and it is very unlikely that any should have come from James to Antioch so immediately after St. Paul's salutation of the Church at Jerusalem and the fulfilment of his vow

there. The time preceding the visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, as related in ch. xv., is far the most likely for the encounter of the two apostles (see ch. xiv. 28; xv. 1, and note). Went through; *διερχόμενος*, as in ch. viii. 4, 40; x. 38; xiii. 6; xvi. 6; xvii. 23, etc. The region of Galatia and Phrygia. In ch. xvi. 6 the order is inverted, "the region of Phrygia and Galatia," R.V., or "Phrygia and the region of Galatia," A.V. The natural inference from this is, as Lewin says, with whom Farrar agrees, that on this occasion St. Paul went straight from Antioch to Galatia, passing through the Cilician Gates and by Mazaca, or Cæsarea, as it was called by Tiberius Cæsar, in Cappadocia, and not visiting the Churches of Lycaonia.<sup>1</sup> He proceeded from Galatia through Phrygia to Ephesus. The distance from Antioch to Tarsus was one hundred and forty-one miles, from whence to Tavium in Galatia was two hundred and seventy-one miles, making the whole distance from Antioch to Tavium in Galatia four hundred and twelve miles, or about a three weeks' journey including rest on the sabbath days. From Galatia to Ephesus would be between six hundred and seven hundred miles. The entire journey would thus be considerably more than a thousand miles, a journey of forty days exclusive of all stoppages. Six months probably must have elapsed between his departure from Antioch and his arrival at Ephesus; Lewin says "several months" (p. 330, note). In order; in the same order, though inverted, in which he had first visited them, leaving out none. Establishing, etc. (*ἐπιστηρίζων*); see above, ch. xiv. 22; xv. 32, 41.

Ver. 24.—*Now for and*, A.V.; *an Alexandrian by race for born at Alexandria*, A.V.; *learned for eloquent*, A.V. (*λόγιος*); *came to Ephesus*; and *he was mighty*, etc., for *and mighty in the Scriptures*, came, etc., A.V. From ver. 24 to ver. 28 is a distinct episode, and an important one, as containing the first mention of a very remarkable man, Apollos (a short form of *Apollonius*, like Epaphras for *Epaphroditus*) of Alexandria, a city destined to play a conspicuous part in Church history, as the traditional Church and see of St. Mark, the school of the Neoplatonists, the scene of the labours of Origen, Clement, and many other men of note, and the birthplace of the Gnostic leaders Cerinthus, Basilides, and Valentinus. The notices of Apollos in the New Testament are ch. xix. 1; 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 4, 5, 6, 22; iv. 6; xvi. 12; Titus iii. 13; and all show St. Paul's high esteem for him. It

was no more his fault than St. Peter's and St. Paul's that the factious Corinthians elevated him, or rather degraded him, into the leader of a party. Eloquent seems to be a better translation of *λόγιος* here than *learned*. The Greek word, which only occurs here in the New Testament, has both meanings.

Vers. 25, 26.—*Had been for was*, A.V.; *spirit for the spirit*, A.V.; *carefully for diligently*, A.V.; *things concerning Jesus for things of the Lord*, A.V. and T.R.; *but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him for whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard*, A.V. and T.R.; *carefully for perfectly*, A.V. Knowing only the baptism of John. It is difficult at first sight to conceive how at this time any one could know the baptism of John without knowing further that of Christ. But a possible account of it is that Apollos living at Alexandria, where as yet there was no Christian Church, had met some Jews who had been in Judæa at the time of John's ministry, and had heard from them of John's baptism and preaching, and of his testimony to Jesus as the Messiah, but had had no further opportunity of careful instruction in the faith of Jesus Christ till he happened to come to Ephesus and make the acquaintance of his compatriots, Aquila and Priscilla. They hearing him speak with fervour and eloquence, but perceiving that his knowledge was imperfect, immediately invited him to their house, and instructed him in the fulness of the truth of the gospel. This necessarily included the doctrine of Christian baptism, which we cannot doubt to have administered to him (John i. 33; ch. i. 5; ii. 38).

Ver. 27.—*Minded for disposed*, A.V.; *pass over for pass*, A.V.; *encouraged him, and wrote to for wrote exhorting*, A.V.; and . . . *he helped for who . . . helped*, A.V. To pass over into Achaia. Nothing can be more natural than the course of events here described. In his intimate inter-course with Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos had necessarily heard much of the great work at Corinth, and the flourishing Church there; and so he longed to see for himself and to exercise his powers in watering what St. Paul had so well planted (1 Cor. iii. 6). Priscilla and Aquila having heard his eloquent sermons at Ephesus, and being interested in the Corinthian Church, seem to have encouraged him, and to have joined with the other disciples at Ephesus in giving him commendatory letters to the Church of Corinth. Encouraged him; *προτρεψάμενοι*, a word found nowhere else in the New Testament, but used in classical Greek and in the Apocrypha, in the sense of "exhorting," "urging." *Προτρεπτικοὶ λόγοι* are hortatory words. In medical writers a "stimulant" is *πρωτρε*

<sup>1</sup> Renan and Howson think he certainly did visit Lycaonia.



πτικόν. There is a difference of opinion among commentators whether the exhortation was addressed to Apollos, as the R.V. takes it, or to the brethren at Corinth, as the A.V. understands it. It seems rather more consonant to the structure of the sentence and to the probability of the case that the exhortation was addressed to the Corinthian Church, and not to Apollos, who needed no such encouragement. Προτρεψάμενοι ἔγραψαν is equivalent to "wrote and exhorted."

Ver. 28.—*Powerfully confuted for mightily convinced, A.V.; the Christ for Christ, A.V.* Powerfully confuted; διακατηλέγετο, one of St. Luke's peculiar compounds, found nowhere else; εὐτόνος here and Luke xxiii. 10 (vehemently), but nowhere else in the New Testament. The adjective εὐτονος, meaning "nervous," "vehement," and the adverb

εὐτόνος, meaning "vigorously," "with force," are very frequent in medical writers; εὐτόνος is also found in the LXX. of Josh. vi. 7, Σημαινέτωσαν εὐτόνος, "Let them blow a loud blast." Showing by the Scriptures, etc. The same line of preaching as St. Peter and St. Paul always adopted when addressing Jews (see ch. ii.; xiii.; xvii. 3; xviii. 5, etc.). It is remarkable that the success of Apollos at Corinth seems to have been chiefly among the Jews, who had opposed themselves so vehemently to St. Paul (ver. 6). It is one of the many proofs of the singleness of eye and simplicity of purpose of the great apostle, that the success of this novice where he himself had failed did not excite the least jealousy (1 Cor. xvi. 12). St. Luke, too, Paul's friend and biographer, here speaks of the powers and work of Apollos with no stinted measure of praise.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—3.—*Christian friendship.* Unselfish friendship, the union of human souls in the bands of a close, unworldly, self-sacrificing love, has always been a spectacle that has fascinated men, one on which they have dwelt with peculiar fondness. Among the Greeks, Pyrates and Orestes, Damon and Pythias; in the Old Testament David and Jonathan, and in the New Testament Peter and John, are examples of such friendships, and of the admiration which men cannot help having for them. But there is not any more beautiful and touching picture of human friendship to be found anywhere than that which rises up before us in the case of Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla. We first find the group in a humble workman's dwelling at Corinth. Drawn together by being ὁμότεχνοι, men of the same trade, they are lodging in the same house. They were brought there indeed from different causes, and from different parts of the world. Paul from Antioch, urged westward by his ardent desire to add new realms to the kingdom of Christ; Aquila and Priscilla driven eastward by the cruel edict of a despot forcing them from their home and all its interests in Italy. They met in Corinth, and dwelt under one roof. There we see the men busy at their trade of tent-making, while the wife, the woman of the house, added that comfort and cheerfulness to the home which the presence of a bright, energetic, intelligent woman is so well fitted to afford. A common trade, a common race, and the common interests arising from both, would soon cement a friendship between two virtuous men thus thrown together in a foreign land. But a much closer bond of union soon knit the two men together. Whether Aquila and Priscilla brought with them from Rome the rudiments of the Christian faith, or whether they first learnt that Jesus is the Christ from the lips of Paul, we have no means of deciding. What is certain is that many words concerning the kingdom of God passed between them in their hours of work. While Paul's industrious hands were travelling and stitching night and day to earn his bread, his eloquent tongue was discoursing of Jesus Christ and his great salvation. Aquila, doubtless well read in the Scriptures, like his later namesake and fellow-citizen in Pontus, was not slow to take in his words; while Priscilla, taking perhaps the woman's part in cutting out and preparing the materials for their work, listened with intense interest to the words of eternal life uttered by the apostle. The friendship begun in earthly relations was soon perfected in the bonds of the love of Christ. We can fancy the hours of united prayer when those two or three were gathered together in the name of Jesus. We can fancy the close fellowship induced by the common enmity of their unbelieving and blaspheming fellow-countrymen. We can fancy their common joy when first one and then another of their Jewish brethren was brought to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. We seem to feel their common anxiety when Paul was

brought before the *bema* of Gallio, and to hear their common praises when the conspiracy was defeated and the apostle was set free. We no longer wonder to read that when Paul set sail for Syria, Aquila and Priscilla went too (ch. xviii. 18), and all that follows follows so naturally. Their labour at Ephesus as the apostle's delegates; their faithful instruction of Apollos; their patient continuance at Ephesus after St. Paul's return (1 Cor. xvi. 19); the Church in their house, both at Ephesus and at Rome (1 Cor. xvi. 9; Rom. xvi. 3); their unbroken attachment to the very latest moment to which our knowledge extends (2 Tim. iv. 19);—all is of a piece with that first holy friendship which was born in the workshop at Corinth, and nourished in the fellowship of faith. The picture leaves a deep impression upon the mind that human friendship, like all else that is good or beautiful in human life, attains its perfect growth, and produces its fairest fruits, when it is laid in a common fellowship with God, and is fostered by a constant partnership in loving labours for the glory of Christ and for the increase of his Church.

Vers. 4—17.—*The testimony.* The kernel of the gospel is the truth that Jesus was the Christ. He was the Person spoken of by all the prophets as to come. Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary, born in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, and crucified in that of Tiberius; known to his contemporaries in Judæa and Galilee as a Teacher and a Prophet; known to later ages by the Gospels which record his life and death and resurrection from the dead; is God's Christ. He came into the world, in accordance with the eternal purpose of God, to be the Teacher, the Saviour, the Judge, the Lord, the King of the whole earth, the Head of the human race. He fulfilled in his own person all the predictions of the prophets; he accomplished by his work all that God had in store for the redemption of the sons of men. Whatever the Holy Ghost spoke of the Godhead, of the priesthood, of the sacrifice, of the reign, of the glorious kingdom of Messiah, has its fulfilment in the Lord Jesus. The truth, therefore, that Jesus was the Christ is the kernel of the whole gospel. But further, this is either a fact or it is not a fact. There is no cloudland of uncertain existence, no matter of doubtful disputation or of fluctuating opinion. Those who have told us these things are *witnesses* of what they knew, not disputers about what they thought. What they have delivered to us is their *testimony*. We must either accept it as true or reject it as false. It has met with both treatments in the world, and, whether believed or disbelieved, has been a potent factor in men's behaviour. When believed, it has made the kind of man that Paul was, the kind of men and women that Aquila and Priscilla were. It has made men pure, holy, upright, patient, meek, kind, unselfish, self-denying, labouring for the good of others rather than for their own gain; with affections set on heavenly more than on earthly things; conscientious, true, faithful to their word; to be trusted and relied upon; great benefactors to their race, full of love to mankind. When disbelieved, it has not simply been set aside as a thing unworthy of credit, but it has set in action the most malignant passions in the human breast. Envy and jealousy, hatred and malice, have blazed up in all their fury against the authors and abettors of this testimony. You would think, judging by the fierce rage of the opponents, that there could not be a greater crime against humanity than to teach men to love God, to abstain from all evil, and to live in peace and good will towards one another. Judging by the rage of the opponents, you would think that a greater wrong could not be done to men than to tell them of life and rest and happiness in the eternal reach beyond the grave, as encouragements to patient well-doing on this side the grave. Jews and heathens, so unlike one another in everything else, were exactly alike in their reception of this testimony. The Jews blasphemed and cursed and persecuted, and brought for punishment before the Roman tribunals those who gave testimony for Christ, the heathen, tolerant of every form of idolatry, let loose fire and sword and wild beast against the harmless disciples of the Lord Jesus. The accomplished philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, gave Justin Martyr to the executioner and Polycarp to the flames, with as little scruple as Nero tortured his Christian subjects at Rome. The scornful hatred of Tacitus for the pestilential superstition of the Christian was as bitter as the scurrilous wit of Lucian. In our own day many tongues are let loose against the testimony. New philosophers, new exponents of the physical laws by which the world consists, new pretenders to superior wisdom and wider intelligence in the various departments of human know-

ledge, however differing among themselves in the fundamental principles of their several schemes, agree in the scornful rejection of "the testimony of Jesus Christ." The Church meanwhile pursues her unwavering course. She holds in her hand the lamp of that truth which she did not invent, but which she received from God. That lamp sheds forth its heavenly light, whether men receive it or whether they shut it out from their hearts and walk on in darkness. For that truth the Church is ready now, as she ever was, to endure the scorn and hatred of mankind or to suffer imprisonment and death. Her office is to testify that Jesus is the Christ. By the grace of God she will continue that testimony until the Lord comes, and her witness to the absent is swallowed up in her adoration of the present, in visible power and glory.

Vers. 18—23.—*The concise narrative.* The grain of mustard seed becomes a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodge in its branches. Could we unfold all that is covered under these few words, whole volumes of surpassing interest might be evolved. The occasion and motives of Paul's vow; the first visit to the capital of Proconsular Asia, to be afterwards the scene of such great events; Pentecost at Jerusalem; the interview with James and the elders of Jerusalem; his thoughts in the metropolis of Christianity, in the stronghold of Judaism, about the aspects of the Church, and the relations of his Corinthians converts to the believing priests and Pharisees at Jerusalem; the execution of his vow, and the state of his feeling towards the temple and its services; his return to Antioch, the metropolis of Gentile Christianity, the new Rome, as it were, of the Christian world; his meeting with old disciples; his narratives of God's work in the new world of Europe, just conquered for the God of Israel; his possible meeting again with Barnabas there, and their tearful reconciliation, and the binding up of the old wound so painful to two good and loving hearts; and then the long and wearisome journey, full of labour and peril, through Phrygia and Galatia; the aspect of old friends and old enemies; the new conquests for Christ, the new triumphs of the gospel, perhaps fresh disappointments from the fickleness of the Gaulish character;—were all this told, and the skeleton verses before us filled in with all this life and action, what volumes we should have! But it has pleased God to seal up all these books, and hide them from our eyes. It is our part to be thankful for what we have, and to draw the lesson that the silence of Scripture is as surely ordered as its revelations are, and that we must read, not to satisfy our curiosity, but to edify our souls.

Vers. 24—28.—*The episode.* The five verses which make up this section are unique in this respect, that the historian, leaving his hero engaged in unknown labours in Phrygia and Galatia, gives us in them a view of what was going on meanwhile at Ephesus. And a most curious narrative it is. It introduces to us one of the most remarkable men of his age, the Alexandrian Apollos, a Jew of great learning, great ability, and great eloquence; and relates his accession to the Church and to the ranks of the Christian ministry, under most singular circumstances. It further gives us a very striking instance of the devotion of Aquila and Priscilla to the work of Christ, and of their eminent services in the infant Church. Of the after career of Apollos we know next to nothing. We see him for a moment, like a blazing comet in the ecclesiastical heavens, striking down opposition and unbelief with the onslaught of his fervid and logical eloquence; we see the reflex of his great influence at Corinth, in the repeated mention of him in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 4—6; iv. 5), written from Ephesus; but the only evidence we have of his continuance in the work which he so brilliantly began, is to be found in St. Paul's brief order to Titus, "Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them" (Titus iii. 13). Yet now manifold, in all probability, were the evangelic labours of Apollos in that interval! How many must have been convinced by him that Jesus is the Christ, and found eternal life in his Name! And if the conjecture of Luther, followed by many since, and recently supported at length by Dr. Farrar ('Early Days of Christianity,' vol. i. ch. xvii., xviii.), that he was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, be true, what a wide extension is given, in time and space, to the Christian influence of this man "mighty in the Scriptures;" and yet for nearly eighteen centuries has all this labour of love, this precious fruit of devoted zeal and spiritual power, been unknown to the Church of God. Surely the reward of the suc-



ceasing evangelist and pastor is not to be looked for in fame and worldly reputation, or the applause of men. And as surely every word spoken for Christ, and every labour endured for the Master's sake, will not be forgotten, but will be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Then perhaps the last will be first and the first last.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—11.—*Truth before the citadel.*** When the apostle of Jesus Christ confronted the heathenism of Corinth, we may say that, in his person, Divine truth was opening its attack on the very citadel of sin; such was its “abysmal profligacy,” its intemperance, its dishonesty, its superstition. In the brief account we have of Paul's work in this city we are reminded—

**I. THAT CHRISTIAN BLAMELESSNESS SHOULD ANSWER TO THE DEPRAVITY IT ENCOUNTERS.** (Ver. 3.) At such a city as Corinth it was eminently desirable that the apostle of truth and righteousness should be, in all respects, above reproach. There must not be the shadow of suspicion of self-seeking upon him; he must show himself, and be seen to be, the disinterested missionary he was. Therefore he worked away with his own hands, laboriously maintaining himself all the while that he was labouring in spiritual fields (see 1 Cor. ix. 15—18). This is the spirit in which it becomes all earnest men to act. We should give ourselves trouble, we should deny ourselves pleasure, according to the necessities of the case before us. Though “free from all,” we should become “the servants of all, that we may gain the more” (1 Cor. ix. 19). There are circumstances in which we are perfectly justified in using our liberty; there are others in which we are constrained to forego our freedom, and impose hardships on ourselves, that we may gain those whom, otherwise, we should not win.

**II. THAT WHEN MEN PERSISTENTLY REJECT THE BEST WE CAN BRING THEM, WE MUST PASS ON TO OTHERS.** (Vers. 5, 6.) When Silas and Timotheus rejoined Paul at Corinth, they found him “earnestly occupied in discoursing;” “he was being constrained by the Word;” he was striving with his whole strength to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But his most zealous efforts were all unavailing. His opponents resisted his arguments; they opposed him and blasphemed his Lord. Then he turned, sorrowfully and indignantly, away from them, and gave himself to the work of God among the Gentiles (ver. 6). This was not more sensible and obligatory then than it is now. If we have been labouring devotedly, prayerfully, patiently, among certain men, and they determinately reject our message, it is both foolish and wrong of us to waste our resources there; we must pass on to others who may welcome our word as the truth of God.

**III. THAT CHRIST WILL NOT LEAVE HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS WITHOUT DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT.** He granted Paul (1) the joy of spiritual success (ver. 8); also (2) the assurance of his protecting care (vers. 9, 10). The exact measure of his success we do not know, but it was probably considerable; the Church at Corinth became of such importance that Paul paid it great attention, and spent on it much strength in after years. The vision which the Saviour granted was supernatural, and of a kind which we do not expect him to repeat continually. But we may confidently reckon that, if we are found faithful by our Master, we shall have: 1. A good measure of success in our work. Earnest Christian effort rarely, if ever, fails. We may, indeed, be ill adapted to the special work we have undertaken, and then we must pass on to other fields; but if we are in our right place, we shall assuredly have some increase for our toil: “In due season we shall reap.” 2. The inspiration which comes direct from God. Christ will come to us, not in such vision as that he granted Paul, but he *will* visit us; he will vouchsafe to us those renewing influences of his Holy Spirit, which will make us (1) willing to endure what we may have to suffer; (2) willing to wait his time for sending the harvest; (3) strong to speak his truth in his Name and in his Spirit.—C.

**Vers. 12—17.—*Fanaticism, pride, calmness, short-sightedness.* I. JEWISH FANATICISM.** (Vers. 12, 13.) The Jews could not or would not understand that Paul was not against the Law, but only against their interpretation of it; that Christianity was not so much the abrogation as the fulfilment of the Law, its reinstitution in another and a better

form, the one and only thing which could perpetuate and immortalize it. They regarded the apostle as a renegade, as an iconoclast, as a traitor; their opposition became hatred; their hatred grew into murderous passion; their passion seized on the earliest opportunity to compass his imprisonment or death. We see in every act the attitude, we hear in every word the tone, of bitter and even furious fanaticism, as they hale Paul before the proconsul and exclaim, "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the Law." This fierceness on their part was characteristic of them; it was of a piece with the rest of their national behaviour before and after that time. It was not unlike the fanaticism of other nations, though it was more violent than that which is commonly displayed. All companies of men are liable to be carried away with passion which they are unable to control at the moment, but which they afterwards regret. Far better than this is—

II. CHRISTIAN CALMNESS. "Paul was . . . about to open his mouth" (ver. 14). We are not told by the historian what was his demeanour. There was no need to tell us. It may be assumed, without the smallest shade of uncertainty, that the "prisoner at the bar" was unmoved by the violence of the mob, and untroubled by the power of the magistrate. His quietness of soul did not proceed from his consciousness of strength, his assurance that he could make out his case against his accusers; it arose entirely from a sense that he stood at that bar as "the prisoner of the Lord," there for conscience' sake; and also from the sense that One stood by him who would not fail him, who would certainly redeem his word (ver. 10), beneath the shelter of whose care he was safe from Jewish spite and Roman power. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. xviii. 10). What time we have reason to be afraid, we will trust in him (Ps. lvi. 3).

III. ROMAN SUPERCILIOUSNESS. (Vers. 14—17.) We can feel an intense Roman pride breathing in every line of this passage. Gallio considered any contention respecting Jewish laws or customs a matter of utter unimportance. Anything outside the circle of Roman citizenship was beneath the regard of such men as he was. And what if certain Greeks vented their wrath on a despicable Jew! Was that to trouble him? We see a haughty disdain on that Roman brow; we hear a contemptuous scorn in those magisterial tones; we perceive a lofty derision in that swift dismissal, in that absolute unconcern. This was the pride that was born of power and of authority. But, however it may have resulted, here, in impartiality and justice, it is not a lovely nor a worthy feature of human character. We are all of us too near one another in proneness to error and liability to overthrow and disaster, to make it right or wise to take such a tone. Human pride is (1) always based, in part, on error; it is (2) always on the way to ruin.

IV. HUMAN SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS. How little did the actors in this scene imagine that they were playing a part on which posterity would always look with interest! How little did Gallio suppose that he would be known to the end of time by reason of his association with that Jewish prisoner whom he contemptuously dismissed from his presence (see Farrar's 'Life of St. Paul,' vol. i. pp. 572, 573)! How imperfectly we measure the importance of the scenes through which we pass, of the actions we perform, of the men with whom we have to do! Let us act rightly, kindly, graciously at all times and toward all people. Who can tell whether we may not be rendering a service to some chosen ambassador of Christ, or lending a helpful hand in some incident on which the gravest issues may hang, or supplying the one link that is wanted in a chain which connects earth with heaven? They who are conscientious and kind in humblest matters will be surprised one day to find (1) what excellent things they have done; (2) what valuable commendation they have earned; (3) what large rewards await them (Matt. xxv. 21, 37—40).—C.

Vers. 18—23.—*The strength which is of man.* The most suggestive sentence in these verses is that with which they conclude; but we may gather lessons from others also. We may learn—

I. THAT THE DIVINE SPIRIT LEAVES US TO LEARN SOME TRUTHS BY THE TEACHING OF EVENTS. (Ver. 18.) We are a little surprised that Paul should think it necessary to trouble himself with ceremonies which, in Christ Jesus, have become obsolete. But this is one of those things which, among many others in our New Testament, show that

God does not *directly* lead his people into the whole truth; he wishes us to learn his mind by the teaching of events, as the early Christians came gradually, and through the lessons of Providence, to understand that they were emancipated from the injunctions and prohibitions of that which was "positive" in the Mosaic Law.

II. THAT OPPORTUNITIES OF USEFULNESS SHOULD BE EAGERLY EMBRACED. There was time for a hasty visit to Ephesus, and Paul did not fail to avail himself of it (ver. 19).

III. THAT EVERY MAN MUST BE ALLOWED TO JUDGE HIMSELF IN MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE. (Vers. 20, 21.) Those Ephesian Jews may have thought—and we may be disposed to agree with them—that it was of greater consequence that they should have the truth preached to them than that Paul should go on to visit an unsympathizing Church. But it was a matter of conscience to him that he should go, and he therefore resisted their entreaties. We *must* form our judgments respecting the decision of others; we *may* offer our opinion and even urge our request; but we are *bound to remember* that it is every man's duty to decide for himself, in the last resort, what he should do and whither he should go. Our urgency should never be pushed so far as to disregard this individual obligation.

IV. THAT THE CHRISTIAN COURTESIES SHOULD BE STUDIOUSLY OBSERVED. (Ver. 22.) It became Paul to salute the Church at Jerusalem. It was the mother Church, with which the other apostles were so intimately connected; it would have been ungraceful on his part not to have maintained friendly, or, at any rate, courteous, relations with it from time to time. It is very probable that there was no cordiality existing between its leaders and himself. Nevertheless, it was better to pay it an amicable visit, as he now did. Cordiality is vastly better than courtesy; but courtesy is decidedly better than disrespect or impropriety, and the irritation which proceeds therefrom. If possible, let unaffected, warm-hearted love prevail and abound; if that be hopeless, then let there be a studious observance of that which is courteous and becoming.

V. THAT THE BUSIEST LIFE SHOULD INCLUDE SOME SEASONS OF REFRESHING REST AND COMMUNION. Even the energetic and anxious apostle, with all his cares and projects, found it well to "go down to Antioch and spend some time there" (vers. 22, 23).

VI. THAT THE WISE TEACHER WILL CARE TO STRENGTHEN HIS DISCIPLES as well as to make converts (ver. 23). Paul was always solicitous to "strengthen his disciples." He was the last man in the world to forget that God was the ultimate Source of all spiritual strength. But he knew that there was much that he, as a Christian teacher, had to do to make his disciples strong. He had (1) to impart a fuller knowledge of the truth; (2) to warn against those doctrines and those habits which would bring spiritual weakness; (3) to incite to holy earnestness by his own spirit of devotion; (4) to counsel his converts to maintain close intercourse with Jesus Christ; (5) to see that they were at their post in the Church and in the field of holy usefulness.—C.

Vers. 24—28.—*Variety in Christian service.* We learn—

I. THAT GOD ENDOWS HIS SERVANTS WITH VARIOUS GIFTS. We have been following the course and rejoicing in the good work of Paul; now we come to another Christian workman of different make,—Apollos. God furnished him with opportunities and faculties that fitted him for service other than that which the great apostle of the Gentiles rendered. Apollos: 1. Had an *acquaintance with Greek thought*, gained at Alexandria, superior to that which Paul would obtain at Tarsus. 2. Had the great advantage of *readiness and force of language*; he was "an eloquent man" (ver. 24). He shared with his more illustrious co-worker (1) a *large knowledge of Scripture*, and (2) *great fervour of spirit* (ver. 25). It is certain that Paul could do what Apollos would never have accomplished; it is equally certain that Apollos could effect some things which were not within the compass of the apostle. Like faithful Christian men, they rejoiced in one another. Instead of underestimating and disparaging one another because they differed in gifts and methods, they valued one another's special work and heartily co-operated in the mission field. Few things are more unworthy and discreditable than petty jealousies and disputations between Christian workmen of different types of excellence; few things are more admirable than the hearty appreciation by one man of the work rendered by another which is beyond his own powers of accomplishment.



II. THAT HUMBLER DISCIPLES CAN RENDER VALUABLE SERVICE TO THOSE WHO ARE DISTINGUISHED. (Vers. 26, 27.) 1. The service of enlightenment. This was rendered to Apollos by Aquila and Priscilla (ver. 26). They had learnt "the way of God" from Paul, and they could and did teach it to Apollos, so that he understood it more perfectly. The little child in a Christian home could teach the profoundest philosopher who was ignorant of revealed truth things which, in spiritual worth, would weigh down all the speculations of his life. Two simple Christian disciples at Ephesus could and did inform the mind of the cultured and eloquent Apollos so that, instructed by them, he would become a great power for truth and Christ in the whole neighbourhood. It is within the power of the simplest and humblest to breathe those words of truth and grace which may make a man a fountain of blessing to his kind. 2. The service of introduction (ver. 27). Unknown brethren wrote a letter, and this, reaching the right hands, introduced a valuable exponent of Christian truth to a large and important sphere. If the act of introduction be regarded as it surely should be, not merely as a means of obliging a friend, but as something in which the Master himself and his Church may be importantly served, then, by the conscientious writing of "a letter of commendation," one who is of humble rank may do excellent work for his kind—he touches a spring whence healing and refreshing waters flow.

III. THAT ONE CHRISTIAN TEACHER MAY FOLLOW ANOTHER WITH THE GREATEST ADVANTAGE. (Ver. 28.) "Apollos mightily convinced the Jews;" perhaps more successfully than Paul would have done. When one Christian workman goes and another comes, the latter supplements the former in two ways. 1. He deepens the impression which the former has made. By bearing the same testimony he constrains the people to feel more convinced of the truth and value of that which they have heard. 2. He brings additional light. He puts the same truth in other forms and phases; he presents it as it has shaped itself to his own mind and has been coloured by his own experience. Thus he meets the need of some whose necessity had not been met, and wins some that would have remained unwon.

IV. THAT THE COMING OF A STRONG SERVANT OF CHRIST SHOULD BE BUT A REINFORCEMENT TO THOSE ALREADY IN ACTIVE SERVICE. The Church at Corinth was not in a state of inactivity and unaggressiveness when Apollos arrived. What he did there was, not to originate a mission, but to *help* those already in the field (vers. 27, 28). He helped them by ably sustaining their endeavours to advance the cause of Christ. The Churches of the Saviour should always and everywhere be in a state of evangelistic activity; then they will be prepared to welcome as a timely reinforcement the coming of a specially powerful advocate who will master and secure those whom he encounters.—C.

Vers. 1—17.—*Paul at Corinth.* I. HIS WORK AT CORINTH. 1. *Its humble and self-denying beginning.* (Vers. 1—4.) (1) He came to Corinth, a city notorious for its pleasures and its vices. Often is the gospel more gladly received in such places than in the haunts of learning and the strongholds of philosophy. The rejected of Athens finds a welcome at Corinth. To the Corinthians the apostle will write by-and-by, "Ye *were* thieves, robbers," etc.; "but ye *are* washed, ye are sanctified," etc. Yet to conquer these hearts, danger and self-denial must be undergone. (2) Paul works to earn his bread while he is teaching. It was a wholesome custom practised and taught by eminent rabbis; probably enough by Gamaliel, at whose feet Paul had sat. Christ was the "carpenter's Son," and the apostles fishers. Happy he who can afford to prove his entire disinterestedness as a teacher of the truth, and so silence that gainsaying of the ungrateful and the miserly, who object to the gospel and its preaching solely on account of its cost. If his example cannot be exactly followed in the present day, at least it may be taken as a rebuke to the pride of office in the teacher, and to unspiritual luxury and idleness in general. Also as an encouragement to the honest craftsman; every honourable calling is well-pleasing to God. "Act well your part; there all the honour lies." Again, willingness to work is one of the best passports everywhere. "Walters on Providence" do not see most of the ways of Providence. Had not Paul been a worker at his craft, good Aquila had not fallen in his way. Driven out of Rome, those pious Jews came to Corinth, to afford shelter and food to the apostle. God "seldom smites with both hands." He is "a good Worker, but he loves to be helped;"

so old proverbs say. (3) His sabbath employment. "Every sabbath." Unwearied zeal characterizes him. Faithful in that which is least, he is faithful in that which is much. The week-day work and the sabbath consecration help one another. Work makes the sacred rest sweet; and the sacred rest gives new energy for work. 2. *Courageous progress.* (Vers. 5—8.) When Timothy and Silas came, Paul, instead of throwing the work upon their shoulders, only redoubles his activity. How useful and how happy "the tie that binds" men's hearts in Christian love and work (Phil. ii. 22)! He continues to witness to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. The previous work in the synagogue had probably been preparatory. But the love of Christ constrains him, and he cannot keep back the main matter of his message, certain as it is to awaken violent opposition. Opposition and blasphemy break out; but the constancy of the servant of Christ is the more illustrated. There is no paltering, no drawing back, no compromise. "Your blood be on your heads!" Thus he clears himself from complicity in the guilt of their spiritual suicide. But before any can venture to imitate Paul's example in this, let them see whether they have done all in their power to raise and save, like the apostle. Driven from the public place of meeting, he goes into the private house of Justus; rejected by Jews, he turns to the heathen. The conversion of Crispus rewards his efforts. Not "many" wise are called (1 Cor. i. 26). At the same time, there are exceptions. Paul goes out by the front door of the synagogue, so to speak, to find his way in again by the back. 3. *The blessed result.* (Vers. 9—11.) The Divine voice came, saying, "Fear not! speak, and be not silent!" Times of weakness and discouragement and self-conflict are for all. The mightiest spirits know the deepest dejection. Recall Abraham before Abimelech, Moses in the desert, psalmists of the Captivity, and prophets, Elijah under the juniper, John in prison, Jesus in Gethsemane, Luther and his violent crises. The latter said, "Many think because I am so cheerful in my outward walk that I tread on roses, but God knows how it stands with me." But saith the voice: "I am with thee; none shall set upon thee to hurt thee; much people have I in this city." "I am with thee:" a word of might, that each and all in every humble or important path of duty may lay to heart, and go forward with his work, clear in speech and strong in action. "I have much people in this city:" the seed and the leaven of the Word works with secret might when we observe it not; sleeping echoes waiting to be roused; seven thousand hidden ones who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

II. *OPPOSITION TO THE WORK.* A year and six months passed in prayer, patience, confidence in God, diligent toil. These are the means by which the work of God is furthered. But the incidents that followed teach that men must suffer for their work, and that all true work involves its cross. The world is the world still; and offences must come. 1. *The charge against Paul.* "He persuades the people to worship God contrary to the Law." How easily do men persuade themselves that what is against their own pleasures is contrary to God's Law! It is nothing new that those who are most given to error in religion are most ready to accuse others of heresy. 2. *The conduct of Gallio.* He referred disputes about the Jewish Law to the Jews themselves. It is wise that magistrates should not pass judgment in matters of religion which they do not understand. But it is not well, if magistrates are indifferent to religion, its genuine reality, and fail to protect sincere believers in the enjoyment of their religious belief. Gallio is a fine example of moderation, putting to shame the bloodthirsty spirit which has so often prevailed in the Christian Church. But it is an abuse if the example be used as a plea for indifference. Gallio, who was cold to religious sympathy, would consent to see a man's civil rights injured. Gallio, on the whole, is a mixed example. Let us say that the duty of a Christian judge is (1) to have a conscience and a religion of his own; (2) not to intermeddle in the affairs of conscience of others; (3) to protect men against violence, of whatever faith they may be.—J.

Vers. 18—22.—*Return of Paul to Antioch.* We do not know the exact nature of the vow he was under. But the following lessons may be drawn from his conduct:—

I. *WORK WHILE IT IS DAY.* Where God opens the door, let the ready servant enter. The voice of the Almighty saith, "Upward and onward evermore!" Work, not for glory and gain, but for the kingdom of God and the salvation of men.

II. *TARRY NOT TO CONFER WITH FLESH AND BLOOD.* Foes might have deterred him

in the front; loving friends might have held him back; difficulties might have made him quail; but he hears but *one* voice, sees but one hand, and goes forward. He who proceeds in this spirit, "unhasting, unresting," is always setting out, always arriving; and, passing unhurt through perils which, if dwelt upon in the imagination, would appear insurmountable, can with thankfulness exclaim, at the end of every step of the life-journey, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!"—J.

**Vers. 24—28.—The eloquent Apollos. I. PAUL AND APOLLOS: A CONTRAST.** "I planted, Apollos watered." Different Divine instruments, shaped out of different material, prepared in different ways, destined for different objects. The unity in variety in Christian character is one of the chief beauties in the garden of God.

**II. APOLLO AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE USE OF CONSECRATED LEARNING IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST.** Here learning is kindled by sacred enthusiasm; it is rooted in faith; it is united with docility; it is applied in the right place and way.

**III. AS AN EXAMPLE OF GROWTH IN GRACE.** It is the need of all. It is attainable by all who seek it in the right way. It becomes blessed and fruitful in new activity in the kingdom of God.

**IV. AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE VARIED SCHOOLS OF LIFE-EXPERIENCE.** In the great school of Alexandria Apollos is among the aristocracy of intellect; at Ephesus he is in the company of tent-makers. It is good to know life on all sides; good to find virtue and grace in the most diverse society; and, above all, to detect in each scene the leading hand and educating wisdom of God.—J.

**Vers. 1—4.—A glimpse into apostolic life. Corinth.** Change of method. In Athens a public challenge offered both to the philosophers and to the citizens generally in the market-place, as well as reasonings with the Jews in the synagogue. In Corinth, a more mercantile and less intellectual city, the preaching was more private and more decidedly on the foundation of the Old Testament, until Paul's separation from the synagogue. Notice—

**I. The apostolic SIMPLICITY AND SINGLENES OF MOTIVE.** The Jew who had learned Christ at Rome was at once associated with Paul. There was no attempt to isolate himself from those who may have learned the truth in a somewhat different manner.

**II. THE SELF-SACRIFICE** of the apostle's daily life. The tent-making supplied temporal wants. Jewish education on the right principle. The cultivation of independence. If not possible in exact repetition, the spirit of such a method should be ours.

**III. BROTHERLY LOVE** the support of zealous service. The messenger of Christ should be full of sympathy. Fellowship with congenial minds is absolutely necessary to refresh and enlarge the feelings.

**IV. GUIDANCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES** in Christian labour. Corinth did not require the same method as Athens. A longer stay seemed advisable. Worldly indifference is more hard to meet and overcome than intellectual opposition. Corinth was pleasure-loving and sensual. The synagogue was made the centre of work, that time might be given to lay hold of popular interest. Patience and prudence necessary.—R.

**Vers. 5—11 (or vers. 9, 10).—Faithful ministry. I. THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN THE MESSENGER.** 1. Testify by a special access of zeal in preaching the Word. Times when we should make unusual efforts to persuade men. We need to guard against monotony. The presence of sympathetic fellow-workers is a great encouragement and incitement. 2. Called out by the blaspheming opposition of unbelievers. If Christians knew what is said against Christ, they would not be so quiet as they are. 3. By Divine intimations encouraging and stimulating. Many of the greatest preachers, Luther, Wesley, Savonarola, have had such visions. In our intercourse with God in prayer we receive such gifts of preparation for our work. Every public man should have his seasons of approach to the throne, that his strength may be fed with the invisible stream of grace.

**II. THE MINISTRY OF PAUL AT CORINTH** in its relation to the Christian Church and the world. (Compare the Epistles.) The commercial influence of Corinth would help the diffusion of the truth. While the people were luxurious they were highly cultured. Greek thought was there, and the close intercourse with Athens would give



the gospel the opportunity to lay hold of Greece as a whole. "The Lord had much people in that city." The two elements of difficulty evinced in the Epistles were the Greek contentiousness, especially developed at Corinth, and the sensual tendencies of a voluptuous, wealthy people. Hence the importance of the Jewish portion of the Corinthian Church. *Crispus* the ruler of the synagogue, and *Titus Justus* the proselyte, would both become important fellow-workers with Paul. Notice, therefore: 1. The union of the Jewish and Greek elements in the early Church and in the development of Christian life; seen in the union of fact and doctrine, of the practical and theoretic, especially in Paul and his teaching (cf. the Epistles throughout). 2. The remarkable guidance of Providence. The opposition of the synagogue leading to a more decided ministry among the Gentiles; and hence to the rapid spread of truth among Greeks, and so through Europe. A merely Jewish religion would never have laid hold of the Greek and Latin minds; Christianity did. We may compare the influence of France during the Middle Ages and since the Reformation, in diffusing ideas among surrounding nations. So we are taught that it is not by human agencies alone that the victims of the gospel are won, but by innumerable instrumentalities and influences working with God's ministers. The conversion of the world may be much nearer than we suppose. Under the surface are hidden operations of God.—R.

Vers. 12—17.—*Contrasts in the attitude of men towards the gospel.* I. LEGALISM. The whole idea of the opponents of Paul was his inconsistency with the Law. 1. It was not reverence for God's Law, but for men's traditions. 2. It was a form of self-worship. "He followeth not with us." 3. It was moral pedantry, a common sin; questions about words, names, and law, hiding realities.

II. SECULARITY. Gallio an amiable and wise man, but doubtless influenced by the prevailing Roman spirit, which was indifference to all religion. "Reason" was his guide. But, while he refused to be a party to religious persecution, he did not put forth his power, as he might have done, to maintain liberty of speech.

III. HEATHENISH IGNORANCE AND DISORDER. The gospel best prospers in the calm atmosphere of peace and reasonable thought. When we excite men's passions against one another, we hinder the cause of truth. Sosthenes, doubtless, was ringleader of the Jews, but the Greeks did no service to the gospel by beating him. Gallio's indifference to the gospel was probably increased by seeing it identified with disorder. The men of the world are not to be won by fanaticism.—R.

Vers. 18—23.—*Retrospect.* An interval in Paul's labours; how long cannot be known. Probably a needed rest; possibly connected with a vow. Employed in visiting Ephesus, sailing to Cæsarea, his long fellowship with the Church there, repairing to Antioch and recounting his successes, for some time; and then revisiting the scene of his labours in Galatia and Phrygia. Thus it was a time of comparative bodily rest, of reflection and preparation for the future, and of confirmed intercourse and fellowship with brethren. Notice, therefore—

I. THE EXAMPLE OF WISE METHOD IN CHRISTIAN WORK. 1. Mingle pauses of rest and thought with activity. 2. Revisit places where seed of truth has been scattered, both to watch the doctrine and strengthen the confidence of new converts. 3. Maintain brotherly sympathy with those labouring for the same Master, but in different ways and places. We should avoid mere individualism in Church life and evangelistic efforts. Paul constantly referred himself to Antioch, and never forgot that he had been recommended to the grace of God by his brethren.

II. AN ILLUSTRATION OF PROVIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT IN THE LIVES OF GOD'S PEOPLE. 1. The absences of Paul from his converts the occasions of his letters, so of his instruction to the universal Church. 2. Apollos made way for at Ephesus. His mission important. Possible necessity among the Ephesians of other elements besides the Pauline; hence both Apollos and, subsequently, the Apostle John. 3. The immense influence of Paul's personal narration of his successes at Antioch, and of his confirmation of the disciples in the infant Churches of Asia Minor. "Man proposes, God disposes," wonderfully illustrated in the early history of Christianity.—R.

Vers. 24—28.—*Apollos.* Alexandria's mission. Its broader view of Judaism. Its

intermediate position between Palestine and the Christian Church. Variety of human talent and acquirement all serviceable to Christ. Humility of the truly good man, who, though himself learned, is willing to be taught by those who have more of the grace of God. Ministers may get help from their people. Apollos in the footsteps of Paul. He was no rival, but a fellow-labourer. Hence willingly forwarded in his proposal to visit Corinth, and carry on there the good beginning made by the apostle. An example of: 1. Consecrated learning. 2. Rapid growth in grace, because the spirit of the man was humble. 3. Brotherly co-operation. What a rebuke to later times! 4. The blessing of God on a pure and active Christianity.—R.

**Ver. 26.—Zeal without knowledge.** “And he began to speak,” etc. The true knowledge is not learning, not even knowledge of the Scriptures as a written Word, but knowledge of the way of God. Priscilla and Aquila may know more, in this sense of knowledge, than Apollos. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned.

**I. THOSE WHO PREACH AND TEACH SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR IT.** 1. Much harm is done by zeal without true knowledge. 2. Progress cannot be rapid where knowledge is imperfect. 3. No amount of fervour in the spirit should be allowed to supersede a careful knowledge of the truth.

**II. THE WAY OF GOD IS NOT THE WAY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, BUT THE WAY OF CHRIST.** 1. Many things about Jesus may be known, and still the saving truth of spiritual life in him may be unknown. 2. Repentance preparatory to faith, not instead of it. 3. The way of God in Christ is not a reformed Judaism, but an entirely new method of religion; spiritual, not formal; by the law of love, not by the law of works. New wine in new bottles. Defective views of the gospel still prevalent. Morality substituted for faith, ritualism for spiritual religion. The way of God is the way of a new creation.—R.

**Vers. 3, 4.—Tent-making a sermon.** Paul has left the mockers, the procrastinators, and the believers, each to reap the fruits he has sown, and, departing from Athens, has reached Corinth. And here we find him the centre of so natural a touch of history, that it speaks its own fidelity. No “cunningly devised” history would have interpolated such an incident as this before us. Nothing but the truth of history could find its niche here. So distinctly as it is recorded, it must be charged with some useful suggestions.

**I. PAUL PUTS HONOUR ON MERE LABOUR WITH THE HANDS.** It were of those matters of exceedingly curious interest, *not* vouchsafed to us, and *not* necessary to “our learning,” if we had been told, what Paul earned as *wage*; or otherwise how he sold what he made. Of one thing we will be sure, he did neither ask nor take more than was the *right* price.

**II. PAUL PUTS ITS REAL HONOUR ON THE APOSTOLIC AND MINISTERIAL OFFICE.** He does this partly, in one of the most effective of ways, *viz.* by withdrawing from that office its merely superficial honour. He strips it of mere dignity, of ease, and of professionalism.

**III. PAUL PUTS HONOUR ON INDEPENDENCE, EVEN IN THE APOSTOLIC OFFICE.** True, in Christianity as in Judaism, that those who minister at the altar have right to live by the altar, and that the exchange of things temporal and “carnal” (1 Cor. ix. 11—14) for things spiritual is sure to be to the preponderating gain of those who part with the former. Yet there may be times when the day shall be won by one clear proof, and that the proof of disinterestedness (1 Cor. ix. 15—18).

**IV. PAUL PUTS HONOUR ON THE FREEDOM OF CHRISTIANITY FROM ANY SET AND ARTIFICIAL CLASS DISTINCTIONS.** The man who speaks and who does the right and the good is the disciple of Christ. And discipleship is not determined, or regulated, or modified, in any way whatsoever by the kind of work to which it puts its hand. A man who prays in all the secrecy of the closet may do more than the man who preaches in all the publicity of the Church. A man who *gives* may haply, on occasion, do more than either. And a man who works at the humblest craft may not only be not second to an apostle, but may be truest apostle himself. How often have heart and mind died away, and nothing been reaped for want of *hand* and foot! The union of the practical with the devotional is often just as truly the *sine quâ non*, as the union of the devotional with the teaching and preaching of the highest seraph-tongue.

**V. PAUL STRIKES AT THE DEEP-LYING PRINCIPLE, SO WELCOME AND HONOURED WHEN**

**RIGHTLY EMBRACED, OF THE SELF-SUPPORTING CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY.** This is its honest pride. It asks air and light. And it asks love and faith, trust and trial. And it thereupon asks *nothing* more, till of it, it comes to be asked, and passionately, what devout, grateful, adoring return in its surpassing condescension it is willing to receive. Beneath not unfrequent disguises, Christianity has been a long history of giving and not taking, giving and not even receiving, till hand and heart have become one. And men, suppliant in loving and overflowing devotion, have *begged* their Master, Lord, and Saviour to accept of themselves and their all.—B.

**Vers. 9—11.**—*The complement to human uncertainty found in Divine fidelity.* It must be supposed either that the omniscient eye saw some signs of failing in Paul, or else that the greatness of the work and the severity of the trials before him were judged by Divine compassion to ask some special help. Notice, therefore, how true it is that—

**I. THE BEST AND STRONGEST OF HUMAN DEVOTION IS LIABLE TO SOME UNCERTAINTY.** No reference is here made to the fickleness that owns to no real devotion, nor ever sprang from depth of root. We are to note that the longest human perseverance may yet break, the stoutest human heart may have its weaker moments, during which irretrievable damage may be done to its cause and discredit to itself, and the warmest devotion may under certain circumstances cool. 1. Exceeding weariness of the flesh may overcome, some unexpected hour, the truest human devotion, if it get left as it were just a moment to itself. 2. An exceedingly baffled state of the mind and of faith may throw that determined human devotion. The vicissitude of the world, the Divine conduct of its history, and, not the least, the Divine conduct of the grand forces of Christianity, when they seem awhile to halt or to be mocked by their own professed friends into discredit,—these often *offer* to baffle each deepest thinker, each most observant reflector. 3. The exceeding keenness of the soul's own peculiar disappointment, when the beauty and the persuasiveness and the unchallengeable merit of Christ do nevertheless count, to all present appearance, for nothing before the brute force of the powers of evil,—this threatens the patience of human devotion.

**II. THE UNFAILING SUCCOUR OF DIVINE INTERPOSITION.** That interposition *rests* on three very thoughts of mercy. They are: 1. The Divine observings of "all and each," and of the most secret heart and need of each. 2. The Divine sympathy. This is one of the great ultimate facts of a risen, ascended, glorified Saviour, who had been once with us, and who still shares, high aloft as he, is our nature. 3. The Divine practical methods of rescue in the hour of danger a provision against its over-storming rage. Among such methods may be ranked: (1) Divine suggestions. These are angels of angels oftentimes to the depressed, the doubting, the darkened, yet the loving and true of heart—they are like nothing, more than those rays of light, which are the brighter and more exactly defined for the darkness of the clouds past which they travel. (2) The triumph of a quickened faith. Surely this is "the gift of God." If faith itself be so, the brightest flashings forth of the very pride of faith, if it be possible to say so, might be yet more inscribed the gifts of God—so opportune, so enlightening, so banishing to doubting darkness and to darkest doubting. There is a moment when perfection is to the fragrance of blossom, the colour of flower, the ripeness of fruit, the light on the landscape, and there are moments when Faith knows and does her very best. And it is at such moments that God "restores the soul" of his servant. The miracle of vision and dream is nothing more pronounced, more certain, more conclusive, to conviction than these triumphal moments, when faith is in its pride and glory, and achieves its best. (3) The direct promise (Ps. xci. 1, 3—6, 11, 12, 14, 15; xxiii. 4; lxxiii. 23). The promise made to Paul in this vision gathers round the centre that had drawn already, then, ages and generations round it; and how many more by this time! "I am with thee." And that central promise is good for all bearings of it, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4). It holds from such a statement of fact as this, to the immortal Christian charter-promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world!" The direct promise, in the midst of our human uncertainty and *unsteadiness* of performance, is clear, exact, steady, and certain. Resting our faith, it feeds hope, and draws closer and closer the bands of love. (4) The conviction of there being, in spite of all appearances, a large harvest to



be gathered. The true servant, after all, *loves* work, and loves his Master's work, and must remember that *he* is neither the Master nor gifted with Master's sight and knowledge. And with what fresh alacrity has he not unfrequently resumed toil, when amid all things that look against himself and his toil, he hears, or seems to hear, the authoritative assurance of the Master, "For I have much people in this city," though at present they "wander as sheep having no shepherd"!—B.

Vers. 12—17.—*A novel instance of retribution.* The common sense of the unlearned has much more mercy than the refinement of the theologian, and the straightforwardness of a heathen will show to more advantage than the crookedness and narrowness of a man better known for professing than for practising religion. We have here a noteworthy instance of some who, would-be punishers of another, succeed in letting themselves only in for punishment. And this just consummation in this case was due exclusively to the ready perception and blunt, uncompromising action of one who evidently had no inclination to lend himself as the tool of iniquitous bigotry and persecution. When it is said, indeed (ver. 17), that "Gallio cared for none of these things," it is possible that, in strict justice, he ought to have cared for so much of them as concerned the lynch law, which, in the very presence of the "judgment-seat," the multitude of the Greeks inflicted upon Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue. Obviously, however, the Greeks were not exceeding the unwritten law or custom of Corinth in their act, and the inaction of Gallio may be sufficiently accounted for by this consideration. Notice—

I. A LARGE NUMBER OF MEN MAKING COMMON CAUSE AGAINST ONE UNBEFRIENDED MAN, IN A RELIGIOUS MATTER AND BEFORE A FOREIGN COURT. If their perverted animosity of mind did not see the anomaly, the unperverted, unwarped mind of Gallio saw it promptly, and felt it decisively.

II. A VERY HOLLOW AND INSINCERE STATEMENT THEREUPON OF THE CASE. 1. The facts of the accusers are not true—scarcely to the letter, not at all to the spirit. 2. If they had been so, it is not this which was likely to give the Jew cause of complaint. The Greek of Corinth might possibly have had some pretence for bringing the matter into prominence, but not the Jew. And Gallio saw through it at once.

III. THE MAN OF TRUE RELIGION, COVERED BY THE ROMAN JUDGES, EXEMPTED FROM THE NECESSITY OF DEFENDING HIMSELF, THOUGH QUITE PREPARED TO DO SO, AND REMITTED TO HIS WORK, FREER AND SAFER TO DO IT THAN EVER.

IV. THE ACCUSERS CONTEMPTUOUSLY DISMISSED, AND THE UNJUSTIFIABLENESS OF THEIR CONTENTION, BEING BROUGHT TO THAT COURT, PROVED OUT OF THEIR OWN MOUTH.

V. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNJUST ACCUSERS SUMMARILY PUNISHED HIMSELF, HIS INIQUITY RETURNING UPON HIS OWN PATE, AND THAT BY THE DEED, NOT OF HIM WHOM HE HAD DONE HIS BEST TO INJURE, BUT BY THE SPONTANEOUS CONCERT OF OTHERS. And every stage of these events spoke to the retributive observation of One who "is angry with the wicked every day," let them be who they may, and their pretences what they may. And every step also spoke the observing and sympathizing care of Christ for one to whom he had just made the promise, "No man shall set on thee to hurt thee; I am with thee." How happy are all they who serve him with all their might, in that they may trust him with all their heart!—B.

Vers. 24—28.—*The opportunities vouchsafed to fitness.* The doctrine of man's opportunity is the correlative of that of God's providence. A world of opportunity there ever is, ever is even for every man. How much of it mournfully perishes for lack of fitness in those who should be fit! A wonderful quantity and variety of fitness there is which waits upon opportunity, hangs precarious on it, but which often pines away because the opportunity given is not seen, or seen is not rightly appraised and humbly accepted. Pride often stands in the way of fitness accepting opportunity. So the whole Jewish nation sinned, and "knew not their King, God's everlasting Son." Whim often stands in the way; one *kind* of opportunity had been preferred and counted upon, and that which actually comes, though no doubt much better in reality, looks so strange that it is disdained. Impatience often stands in the way; for how much of opportunity depends on *ripeness*, ripeness of time fitted to the exact ripeness of character, and many will not wait, nor believe, nor trust! In all such cases, the waste,

the sacrifice, the absolute unqualified loss are what only the omniscient eye can see, and are such that the eye of Jesus would "weep" over them. A much happier view of fitness, which courted opportunity, and of opportunity which was divinely vouchsafed to fitness, is here before us. Let us observe—

I. THE FITNESS. It is illustrated in two instances. 1. *The instance of Apollos.* (1) He was eloquent. It was very possibly a native gift with him. If it were such, it was used—used in a good cause, improved by use. Many a natural advantage is not used; or is so sluggishly used that it wins no improvement and earns no talent beside itself; or used, it is used to inferior ends or to really bad purpose. So far from its being able to be described as "improved," it both desecrates and is desecrated. (2) He had the fitness of one who had acquired knowledge of the Scriptures, and very hearty, thorough knowledge of them. He understood their parts and their harmony. He could, no doubt, quote them, compare them, vindicate them against misinterpretation or very weak interpretation. And thoroughness of acquaintance with them raised their meaning and value and admirableness incomparably for him. A very scanty, meagre acquaintance with Scripture is dishonour offered to it and its high worthiness; but, furthermore, it has no value for the subject of it. He is stricken with famine in the presence of rich abundance, and the strickenness is all his own doing. The average modern Christian loses, perhaps, beyond all that is supposed, from this one source. (3) He had been instructed and had taken the graft of such instruction respecting the Messiahship of Jesus. "This word," upon which all turned for the Jew of that day, he had "received with meekness." And this word, though at present he had not got beyond the "baptism of John," and knew little of the "baptism of the Holy Ghost," was bearing already "much fruit." (4) He owned to the great qualification of "fervour in the Spirit." It was a fervour assuredly not all his own, not altogether native in gift. The Spirit had condescended to descend and light upon him. (5) He had a certain fitness of practical aptitude at speaking. And he did not bury it. He began by "speaking" as if in conversation with one or more. He went on to "teaching," and neither his teaching nor any who heard it rebuked his advance, it would appear, till he found himself "preaching boldly" in public in the synagogues. It is just as though impulse had been faithfully obeyed, and felt its way, felt it rightly from step to step. (6) He had also a certain missionary fitness. No large language boasts it to us, but the significant language of his deeds speaks it. He was "disposed" to pass onward. This is the disposition of the gospel. It refuses to stagnate. It refuses to be partial. It refuses to forget "the ends of the earth." It refuses to stay its course till it shall "cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." 2. *The instance of Aquila and Priscilla.* Behind the all-brief allusion to them, what a background, we may be well assured, lies! What loss of worldly business, what vexation, what fatigue, what wounded hearts and painful aspects of human life, and strange estimates of the great Invisible, must have been the oft visitants of those banished Jews of Rome! Yet (1) they had fallen in with Paul, and not been afraid of him, nor of his truth, which was one with him, and they had "learned of him." Ay, it was the foundation of all fitness for them. But (2) they had admitted Paul to be "partners" with them, or workman for them at wages, and had received him as an indoor servant. So they had not only learnt the first outline and elements of Christian truth, but they had enjoyed the priceless advantage of learning ever so much more by question and answer, at many an odd moment, when the light burst in on them like a flash of lightning, only with healing instead of alarming effect. They had learned in many a nicely disposed frame of mind, when a quarter of an hour gave more than a week would have otherwise given. They had also been relieved and cheered through long stretches of wearisome toil, yet the time sped all too quickly. And many a time they said, in thinking of it all, "Did not our heart burn within us?" They were qualifying for nothing different from this—to "expound the way of God more perfectly" to others. (3) They had come to feel themselves, if it might at all be so, "inseparable" from Paul. They must go with Paul (ver. 18) into Syria and to Ephesus (ver. 19). "There," it is significantly said, "he left them" (ver. 19), for it was time their own separate usefulness and ministry should begin.

II. THE OPPORTUNITY. 1. *For Apollos.* He seemed made for usefulness. (1) He had begun work right heartily before Aquila and Priscilla had told him the latest and

the best. So he had already found his work out of the various fitnesses which lay in him, which he had not neglected, not resisted, not despised. (2) The opportunity of large accessions of knowledge are thrown in his way, and he embraces them and owns them. Possibly the tent-making couple, man and wife, did not ordinarily stand very high in repute with the learned and polished of Alexandria (ver. 24). But as surely as they recognize the right ring about him, so does he about them. And he is glad of the providential opportunity held out to him, to have "the way of God expounded" to him more completely and fully. (3) The opportunity is opened to him of passing on to other ground, accredited by "the brethren," till he finds himself the true living centre of a people to God's glory. He is the "much helper" of them, who had already "believed through grace," and he is the effective, trenchant, and successful convincer of many others, of "the truth as it is in Jesus." What a lesson for young men! And how many persons of great gifts not used, misused, or sluggishly used, are sternly rebuked by the example of Apollos! While he is an example of how God will find the work and the opportunity and the glorious usefulness for those who have and improve and dedicate to him their fitness, of whatever kind, for his work. 2. *For Aquila and Priscilla.* These had been blessed themselves. Very likely, indeed, they had been a real help and comfort in private and in travelling to Paul. We can see them, wherever the modest opportunity offered, modestly stepping in and using it for the glory of Christ and the good of the brethren and others. But they had never thought of anything beyond such silent, unknown, unrecorded usefulness. But no, it shall not be so. A new opening occurs; they see it, and use it. They teach the teacher. They furnish the armoury of the capable, skillful, valiant warrior. Not a victory that Apollos won afterwards, but their share was registered up above; and not a tender plant he watered (1 Cor. iii. 6), but the refreshingness came partly of their work, while "God gave the increase." For love, and care, and study, and zeal for him, Christ will never long withhold that best present reward, the reward of sufficient opportunity.—B.

Ver. 1.—*Corinth as a model sphere of missionary labour.* The service of the apostle in no city or district is more fully detailed than his service at Corinth, and there is so much of interest connected with that city, that we may consider somewhat fully the work that had to be done, and the work that was done there. A general sketch of the place, its character, and its history will suggest the directions in which further study and research may be hopefully pursued. The most complete and careful note is the following, by Dean Plumptre:—"The position of Corinth on the isthmus, with a harbour on either shore, Cenchreae on the east, Lechæum on the west, had naturally made it a place of commercial importance at a very early stage of Greek history. With commerce had come luxury and vice, and the verb *Corinthiazein*, equal to 'live as the Corinthians,' had become proverbial, as early as the time of Aristophanes, for a course of profligacy. The harlot priestesses of the temple of Aphrodite gave a kind of consecration to the deep-dyed impurity of Greek social life, of which we find traces in 1 Cor. v. 1; vi. 9—19. The Isthmian games, which were celebrated every fourth year, drew crowds of competitors and spectators from all parts of Greece, and obviously furnished the apostle with the agonistic imagery of 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. On its conquest by the Roman general Mummius (B.C. 146), many of its buildings had been destroyed, and its finest statues had been carried off to Rome. A century later, Julius Cæsar determined to restore it to its former splendour, and thousands of freedmen were employed in the work of reconstruction. Such was the scene of the apostle's new labours, less promising, at first sight, than Athens, but ultimately far more fruitful in results." Taking the point of view indicated in the heading of this homily outline, we notice that—

I. CORINTH WAS THE PLACE TO TEST THE ADAPTATION OF THE GOSPEL TO ALL CLASSES OF SOCIETY. The experience of long years and many missionary journeys was epitomized at Corinth. Not even Rome presented such an assemblage of all classes and grades, of all nationalities and races. It was just the place wherein to show what "almighty grace can do." And the great apostle sought it with much the same instinct that leads the revivalists of our day to seek London, or Glasgow, or Paris. The population of Corinth was largely democratic, and its aristocracy was that of wealth rather than of



birth. Commerce brought to it sailors and merchants from all parts of the world. There was a considerable Greek population, and a large number of Roman settlers. And we may add that the Jewish nation was well represented. St. Paul preached the gospel to them all, and it proved the power of salvation unto all who believed.

II. CORINTH WAS THE PLACE TO TEST THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL ON MEN UTTERLY DEBASED AND CORRUPTED BY SIN. The moral iniquity of Rome, as described in Rom. i., may help us to realize the profligacy of Corinth. F. W. Robertson says, "The city was the hotbed of the world's evil, in which every noxious plant, indigenous or transplanted, rapidly grew and flourished; where luxury and sensuality thrived rankly, stimulated by the gambling spirit of commercial life, till Corinth now in the apostle's time, as in previous centuries, became a proverbial name for moral corruption." Can the gospel cleanse the unclean, deliver those enslaved by vice, break the bondage of degrading habits, and give men command over their passions? Can even worse than Jerusalem sinners be saved? And is there hope for the most abandoned nations? St. Paul's successes at Corinth are the sufficing answer.

III. CORINTH WAS THE PLACE TO DEVELOP THE RELATIONS OF CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES TO SOCIAL AND FAMILY LIFE. Show how the common everyday life and relations of the people had been toned by their idolatrous religion. The practical question comes to every man who yields his heart to Christ—What changes will the Christian principles make in my conduct? Illustrate how St. Paul had to decide many details, and illustrate the working of the Christian principles in his letters to the Corinthian Church. And he thus has rendered invaluable service to the Church of all the ages.—R. T.

Ver. 6.—*Personal religious responsibility.* "Your blood be upon your own heads." Introduce by reference to St. Paul's relations with the Jews. Up to this time he had been strictly loyal to the Jews, and wherever he went he had taken the gospel first to them. No doubt the hindrance of their prejudices, and the violence of their opposition, had weaned him from them and prepared the way for the separation of the Gentile from the Jewish Christians, which took place at Ephesus (ch. xix. 9). The terms that are used to describe the conduct of the Jewish party are very strong ones, and help to explain the intense feeling of indignation excited in the apostle. "Opposed themselves" is a military term, implying organized and systematic opposition. How strong St. Paul's feelings were is indicated in his act of "shaking his raiment." "As done by a Jew to Jews, no words and no act could so well express the apostle's indignant protest. It was the last resource of one who found appeals to reason and conscience powerless, and was met by brute violence and clamour." The phrase which the apostle used is evidently a proverbial one; it must not be regarded as a mere passionate imprecation; it is a last solemn warning. With it should be compared such passages as 1 Kings ii. 32, 33, 37; Ezek. iii. 18; xxxiii. 4; Matt. xxiii. 35. St. Paul did not from this time entirely give up preaching to the Jews, but he gave up preaching to those who lived at Corinth. The point on which we fix attention is that St. Paul had recognized and borne responsibility for them as their teacher, but that responsibility he refused to bear any longer; he cast it back altogether on themselves.

I. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TEACHER. This is fully dealt with, in relation to the ancient prophets, by Ezekiel (iii. 17—21; xxxiii. 1—19). The prophet, or teacher, or preacher, is: 1. A man set in relation with others who is one of them; who can speak to, or influence, others. 2. A man with a message to be given to others. He is a recipient of Divine truth for the sake of others. He has a sphere and a message. Out of these two things comes his responsibility. For the time and occasion, he actually takes upon himself the responsibility of the souls of those to whom he is sent, since their eternal well-being may be dependent on his faithfulness in the delivery of his message. Illustrate that Jonah took upon himself the fate of Nineveh as a nation. So every true preacher now, who has a message from God, finds that the secret of his power lies in the measure in which he can take the responsibility of his audience upon himself, and feel that his testimony will be a savour of "life unto life," or of "death unto death." He can only be cleared of his responsibility before God in two ways. (1) By fully delivering his message. (2) By the wilful rejection of his message. Impress what a burden on the Christian preacher's heart is the burden of souls; and with what an agony of feeling he sometimes would cast off the burden, saying, "I

is sufficient for these things?" But what is overwhelming responsibility from one point of view is holy joy of service from another point of view. Who would not willingly stand with Christ, and feel how "he bare our infirmities and carried our sorrows"? "It is enough for the servant that he be as his Lord."

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEARER. It may be said—Is it not better to have the people without the knowledge of the truth, if such knowledge increases their responsibility and final judgment? The answer is: (1) We *must* preach the gospel, whatever may prove to be the issues of our work. (2) Bearing responsibilities, and lifting ourselves to meet them well, are the conditions of moral growth. No man can reach a full manhood save under the pressure of responsibilities. Those of the *hearer* are: (1) To listen to the teacher of Divine truth. (2) To recognize the personal relations of the truth he hears. (3) To decide for himself the acceptance or rejection of the message. (4) To bear all the present and future consequences of whatever decision he may make. Impress that the most painful thing about the woe of lost souls will be the conviction that they were themselves to blame. "Their blood was upon their own heads."—R. T.

Vers. 9, 10.—*God's grace in times of depression.* The point of this gracious and comforting manifestation of God to his servant is that it came at a time of much perplexity, anxiety, and depression. It told of the Divine care of the earnest and faithful apostle, and gave him the restful assurance that, however men might oppose and trouble him, God accepted his service, and would surely guard him from all evil until his work in that city was complete. We may compare the proverbial assurance which has often brought comfort to our hearts, "Man is immortal till his work is done." It was one of the marked peculiarities of the Divine dealing with St. Paul, that at the great crises of his life special visions were granted to him. At the time of his conversion, he had seen and heard the Lord (ch. ix. 4—6). When in a trance at Jerusalem, he heard the same voice and saw the same form (ch. xxii. 17). When on the ship, during the great storm, an angel form appeared to him with a gracious and assuring message (ch. xxvii. 23, 24). When called to appear before his judge, he seems to have had an unusual sense of Christ's nearness, for he says, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me" (2 Tim. iv. 17). And he gives a full account of his remarkable uplifting to see unspeakable things in 2 Cor. xii. 1—7. But all who are so sensitively toned as to have such seasons of spiritual elevation are singularly liable to answering moods of depression. They who can thus rise high can also sink low; and St. Paul did but tell of actual and painful experiences when he said, "Without were fightings and within were fears." At Corinth circumstances greatly troubled him. Some measure of success attended his preaching, but he seemed to make more and worse enemies than ever; he separated the Christian disciples from the synagogue in the hope of getting some quietness and peace, but the prejudiced Jews of the synagogue continued their persecutions, until St. Paul's spirit was well-nigh broken, and he had almost made up his mind to leave Corinth, and seek for other and more hopeful spheres. And yet he felt that this would be running away from his work, and forcing God's providence, seeing that no directions for his removal from Corinth had been given to him. It was just at this period of anxiety and depression that the comforting message came to him. Illustration of similar moods of feeling, in other servants of God, may be found in Elijah (1 Kings xix. 4—14), in Jeremiah (Jer. i. 6—8; xv. 15—21); and in John the Baptist's sending from his prison to Jesus, asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Having this incident and its surrounding circumstances well before us, we may consider two things: (1) what the incident tells us of St. Paul; and (2) what the incident tells us of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. WHAT THE INCIDENT TELLS US OF ST. PAUL. It intimates: 1. That he suffered from bodily frailty. A burden of physical weakness constantly oppressed him and affected his spirits. Compare Richard Baxter or Robert Hall, men whose holy labours were a continual triumph of will and of heart over pain and weakness. Show the subtle connections between bodily conditions and apprehensions of Divine truth. It is most comforting to be assured that God "knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." 2. That he was naturally of a most sensitive and nervous constitu-

tion, so that he felt everything most keenly. Such natures yearn for love with an intense passion, and they feel slights and unkindness, and seeming failure and unfaithfulness, in those they trust, with a passion equally intense. They have altogether higher joys than most men can know, but they have answering sorrows deeper than most men can sound. To such natures alone can spiritual visions come: they gain the truth by power of insight; and, often at the cost of extreme personal suffering and distress, they become the great thought-leaders and teachers of the age. Such men are amongst us still, and they need the tenderest consideration and sympathy. They will reward us by thoughts and views of Christ and of truth such as never can be won by mere study. Their love and faith alone can sound the deep things of God.

II. WHAT THE INCIDENT TELLS US OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. 1. The first thing is the assurance it gives of Christ's actual presence with his servants. He may not always be felt, but he is always present. 2. He is never failing in his gracious and tender interest in their *doings*, and in *them*. 3. He is ready to make manifestations of himself, and of his will, to his servants, in exact adaptation to their needs. 4. He may show his nearness, and assure his servants of his sympathy and help in unique ways. The point of all our Lord's manifestations to his people is the need for keeping up in their souls the conviction that *he is really with them*. All comfort, strength, and security for Christian workers come with this conviction. So St. Paul elsewhere declares, "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me."

We may learn: 1. That times of depression are no unusual experience for God's people. 2. That they may even come in the very midst of our work. 3. That they are under the gracious watching of the Master whom we serve. 4. And that they are only the sides of weakness that belong to natures endowed with special capacities for special work.—R. T.

Vers. 12—17.—*Gallio's indifference.* It is a singular thing that altogether unworthy ideas should have been associated in Christian minds with this man Gallio. He is known to have been the brother of Seneca, and a man of singular amiability of character. "Seneca dedicated to him two treatises on Anger and the Blessed Life: and the kindness of his nature made him a general favourite. He was everybody's '*Dulcis Gallio*,' was praised by his brother for his disinterestedness and calmness of temper, as one 'who was loved much even by those who had but little capacity for loving.'" F. W. Robertson remarks on the expression, "Gallio cared for none of those things;" "that is, he took no notice of them, he would not interfere. He was, perhaps, even glad that a kind of wild, irregular justice was administered to one Sosthenes, who had been foremost in bringing an unjust charge. So that instead of Gallio being, as commentators make him, a sort of type of religious lukewarmness, he is really a specimen of an upright Roman magistrate." But a careful judgment of the incidents which bring Gallio before us leaves the impression that the general idea of his character is in great measure the correct one; his easy-going gentleness was only too likely to lead him to connive at wrong-doings, and fail adequately to punish wrong-doers. From the narrative we may learn such things as these—

I. SOME THINGS ARE BEST TREATED WITH CONTEMPT. In life we often meet with difficulties which are made by treating trifling matters seriously. 1. Certain forms of opposition to Christian truth are best "left alone." They grow into importance by being treated as if they were serious. 2. Officious and intermeddling persons are best treated with a quiet scorn; by making much of them utterly incompetent persons are lifted into positions for which they are wholly unfitted. In the practical relations of society and of the Church there is a mission for humour, satire, and even scorn; and in the use of such weapons we have the example of St. Paul. But it is manifest that such weapons are dangerous, and may only be used with due caution and reserve.

II. RELIGIOUS QUARRELS MAY OFTEN WISELY BE TREATED WITH CONTEMPT. The disputes and contentions which arise in religious communities seldom bear relation to principle; they usually come from petty misunderstandings, or aroused personal feeling. Mischief comes by fostering them, giving them importance, and letting them develop their evil influence. There is often needed, in religious associations, the strong firm ruler who, like Gallio, will refuse to hear miserable contentions about words and names, or to heed the reports of slanderers and backbiters. It is seldom found possible to



heal religious quarrels, and it is practically wiser to treat them as we treat spreading diseases—stamp them out, by the refusal to recognize them. Let them die out; and this they will surely do if we take care not to fan the flame.

III. THE CLAIMS OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH AND DUTY MAY NEVER BE SET ASIDE WITH CONTEMPT. Whoever may present them, under whatever circumstances they may be presented, they demand our attention, our calm, careful consideration. Nothing of truth may we leave alone, whether it be *old* truth set before us with a new vividness and force, or *new* truth which is apparently opposed to all our prejudices. All truth comes to us with a "Thus saith the Lord;" and, as God's voice to us, we dare not be indifferent, much less may we be contemptuous. Show what truths and duties may come before us; apply especially to the gospel offer; press the demand for immediate attention on this ground, "It is not a vain thing for you; it is your *life*."—R. T.

Ver. 18.—*St. Paul's personal relations with Judaism.* "Having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow." For the various explanations of this allusion which have been offered, reference must be made to the Exegetical portion of this Commentary. For some reason, which St. Paul regarded as sufficient, he had allowed his hair to grow for a time, and now, the time of the vow being nearly expired, he had his hair cut (not shaved) before starting on his journey into Syria. The point to which we bend attention, as suggesting suitable lessons for us, is that, being a born Jew, St. Paul found himself bound by rules and ceremonials which he did not feel justified in pressing upon his Gentile converts. This may give a seeming inconsistency to St. Paul's conduct, but it really reveals the nobility of his spirit, and the self-mastery and self-rule which he had won. We should carefully distinguish between the limitations under which a good man and wise teacher may please to confine his own personal conduct, and the freedom from such personal limitations which he may enjoin in his public teachings. As an illustration, reference may be made to such matters as card-playing and going to theatres. The Christian teacher who feels that no rule on such matters can be laid down, is quite consistent with such teaching if he pleases to put himself under rule, and will neither play cards nor attend theatres. And this was the position of St. Paul. He felt that personally he did not wish to break off the familiar Jewish bonds of his lifetime; but while he personally met all Jewish claims, he resolutely championed the freedom of the Gentile Christians from all such restrictions and limitations. Impress that the details of a man's conduct are fully within his own management, and that in our public relations we can only deal with principles, leaving all direct applications to the judgment and conscience of the individual. Still, it should be noticed that the apparent diversity between St. Paul's personal conduct and public teachings gave his enemies a seemingly fair ground of accusation. We remark that—

I. A MAN'S PERSONAL LIFE MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH HIS PUBLIC TEACHINGS. Two things we demand of a public teacher: (1) the "accent of conviction;" and (2) the "note of sincerity." The force behind a man must be the force of the *man himself*. We must know *him*, and have adequate assurance that the things he speaks have a living power upon himself. We properly require something more than consistency; we ask for a harmony between words and works which will show that each are set to the same keynote. If St. Paul's enemies were right, and his Judaical practices were out of harmony with his public teachings, then they pluck the life and power from his teaching. Impress that still all public teaching is ineffective which is beyond the personal attainment of the speaker. He can only utter it as intellectual knowledge or as current sentiment. A man only speaks with power when he tells what he has himself "tasted and handled and felt of the Word of life."

II. A MAN'S PRIVATE LIFE MAY BE RULED BY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH HE DOES NOT FEEL BOUND TO PRESS ON OTHERS. This is the point suggested by our text, and a simple illustration will show us St. Paul's position. A Christian teacher nowadays may be personally impressed with the examples of David and Daniel, and may feel that to adopt a rule of praying three times a day will be of direct service to his spiritual life. But he may feel that he has no right to press his rule upon his congregation as a binding one for all. He commends the duty of prayer, but he puts himself under limitations which are for himself alone. Many Christian people make intellectual and spiritual advances, which we might think would give them a large freedom in conduct, and yet

the fact is that, to the end of their days, they voluntarily keep up their old habits and practices, preferring to set themselves within what they find to be well-ordered limitations. In such cases it is rather an over-severe consistency than anything like inconsistency which we find. Modern evil rather goes in the direction of over-demand of personal liberty as new aspects of Divine truth gain prominence. There is too little of Pauline self-regulation on the Christian principles.

III. A MAN'S PERSONAL LIMITATIONS NEED NOT CONFUTE HIS PUBLIC TEACHINGS. They may be matters of dispute, on which the Church is divided. He need not make his decisions, for the ordering of his own private life, keep him from the *public* utterance of the great principles and duties. The readiest illustration of this point may be taken from the use of fermented drinks. A Christian teacher may decide that it is necessary for his well-being that he should use such drinks regularly and moderately. Now, such a man is not debarred by his own personal habit from publicly dealing with the great social evil of drunkenness. He can in no way be charged with inconsistency, since the matter is one of personal limitation, and not one of scriptural principle. St. Paul claimed the right to preach as a Gentile, and to limit himself by Jewish rules, it pleased him to do so.—R. T.

Ver. 23.—*Strengthening disciples.* St. Paul's method of itinerating involved something like a systematic revisitation of the Churches he founded, and the keeping up of a connection with them by letter, when he could not give his bodily presence. He seems only to have remained long enough in any one place to gain a number of disciples, and to start them fairly, with something like Church order, self-government, and adequate teaching force, from among themselves. His plan tended to develop the self-dependence of the early Christians; and it made very real St. Paul's doctrine of the actual presence and Divine leading of the Holy Ghost. But we can also see that it placed the young Churches in grave peril, and there can be no reason for surprise if we find that in doctrine they yielded to the influence of bold but imperfect or false teachers; and in practical life felt the contaminating influence of surrounding immoralities. It is plain that occasional visits or letters from the older teachers were imperatively necessary, and the work done by such visits or letters is variously styled *confirming*, or *strengthening*, the disciples (ch. xiv. 22; xv. 32—41). The word "strengthening" seems, however, to suggest that St. Paul found some weakening of faith, and failure of character and conduct, which he knew would only too readily develop into doctrinal and practical heresies. We may take this term "strengthening" and apply it to some of the forms of pastoral and ministerial service in our own times. Something is done in the way of visiting and confirming the Churches by our older and honoured chief pastors, but it may be urged that here is a sphere of hopeful service which may be much more fully occupied.

I. "STRENGTHENING" AS APPLIED TO THE RENEWALS OF MORAL FORCE IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION. Our Lord fairly forewarned his disciples that they must look for persecution. It came heavily upon the young Churches, not only in those open forms of which history has preserved the records, but also in those thousandfold more searching forms which belonged to family and social life. Power of resistance and steadfast endurance came indeed from the grace of God and the leadings of the Holy Ghost, but these ever fit in with, and work through, a due and careful culture of moral character. There are principles, considerations, and sentiments which strengthen and steady men to endure persecution. And these still form one great theme of pastoral treatment, since, in subtler ways, it is found true to-day that "they who will live godly must suffer persecution."

II. "STRENGTHENING" AS APPLIED TO ESTABLISHMENT IN CHRISTIAN TRUTHS. Three processes are ever going on which need careful watching and wise correction. 1. Men who at one time grasp truth strongly, and make it a power on heart and life, gradually get to loosen the grasp, and lose the practical influence of the truth on the conduct. 2. Men who do not at first get a really clear hold of truth soon come, unwittingly, to misrepresent it and injure it; not from an intention of introducing freshness, or from any desire to encourage heresy, but simply from feebleness of mental grip and inability to apprehend truth clearly. The evils which Christian doctrine has suffered from this cause have never been duly estimated. 3. Men who are of inquisitive and

restless dispositions are too easily attracted by heretical notions. St. Paul had to deal with all these forms of evil, and he strove to correct them by establishing more firmly than before, in mind and heart, the great Christian foundations; going over, again and again, the "first principles of the doctrine of Christ."

III. "STRENGTHENING" AS APPLIED TO PRACTICAL HELP IN CHRISTIAN LIVING. Many practical questions arose in those times out of the relations of Christian principles to pagan customs, such as the eating of meat which had been offered in sacrifice to idols. And though Christians, under the apostolic guidance, would at first take a decided stand in relation even to the details of private and social life, we can well understand that daily association would gradually wear down their resistance, and they would fail to keep the strictness of moral purity, and the full power of Christian clarity, under the influence of daily surroundings. It is too seldom duly considered how the worship and ministry of each returning sabbath day helps to keep up the moral standard of life and conduct among Christian people.

IV. "STRENGTHENING" AS APPLIED TO THE QUICKENING OF ZEAL IN CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE. The Christian Church is essentially an aggressive Church. It has its mission, and that mission is to the world. It has no right of existence save as it seeks to extend and enlarge itself. A selfish regard for its own interests is simply ruinous to its own best interests. And yet we find that individuals and Churches are ever liable to flag in energy and enterprise, and weakly to fall back upon mere self-culture, or upon the excuse that they must attend to their self-culture. Apostles, and earnest men in all ages, have to arouse the Church to a sense of its duties and responsibilities, and to strengthen it for duly meeting and fulfilling them. And so we find, in St. Paul's letters to the Churches, indications of the various spheres and departments in which he found it necessary to "strengthen the disciples." Illustrate by the tender scene in the life of David, when his friend Jonathan found him out, in his time of depression and seemingly hopeless failure, and "strengthened his hand in God."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1.—*Country for coasts, A.V.; found for finding, A.V. and T.R.* The upper country (*τὰ ἀνωτερικὰ μέρη*); the inland districts of Galatia and Phrygia, through which St. Paul journeyed on his way to Ephesus, as distinguished from the seacoast on which Ephesus stood. Disciples. They were like Apollos, believers in the Lord Jesus through the preaching of John the Baptist. It looks as if they were companions of Apollos, and had come with him from Alexandria, perhaps for some purpose of trade or commerce.

Ver. 2.—*And he said for he said, A.V. and T.R.; did ye receive for have ye received, A.V.; when for since, A.V.; nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given for we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, A.V.* Did ye receive, etc.? The R.V. gives the sense much more accurately than the A.V., which is, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost at the time of your baptism, when ye first believed?" Something led the apostle to suspect that they had not received the seal of the Spirit (comp. Eph. i. 13, *πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε*), and so he asked the question. The answer, *Nay, we did not so much as hear whether*

the Holy Ghost was given, as in the R.V., is justified by John vii. 39, where the exactly similar phrase, *ὅπως ἦν Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον*, is rendered in the A.V., "The Holy Spirit was not yet given." "*Esse prodesse*" (Bengel). The sense given in the A.V. does not seem probable. The answer means, "Not only have we not received the Holy Spirit, but we had not even heard that the dispensation of the Spirit was come."

Ver. 3.—*He said for he said unto them, A.V. and T.R.; into for unto (twice), A.V.* Into what then were ye baptized? Nothing can mark more strongly the connection between baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit than this question does. For it implies, "How could you be ignorant of the giving of the Holy Ghost if you were duly baptized?" (comp. ch. ii. 38) The answer explains it, "We were baptized with John's baptism, to which no promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost was attached."

Ver. 4.—*And Paul said for then said Paul, A.V.; John for John verily, A.V. and T.R.; Jesus for Christ Jesus, A.V. and T.R.* The baptism of repentance. See Luke iii. 3, etc., and for the difference between John's baptism and that of Christ, Luke iii. 16. Him which should come after him (Luke iii. 16; John iii. 28; Mark i. 7).



**Ver. 5.—***And when for when, A.V.; into for in, A.V.* Into the Name of the Lord Jesus (see ch. viii. 16). So too ch. x. 48 of Cornelius and his company, "He commanded them to be baptized in the Name (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι) of Jesus Christ" (R.V.). The formula of baptism, as commanded by the Lord Jesus himself, was, "In [or, 'into'] the Name (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 20). But the candidate always first made a profession of his faith in Jesus Christ, as in the A.V. of ch. viii. 37; and the effect of baptism was an incorporation into Christ so as to partake of his death unto sin and his life unto righteousness. It was, therefore, a true and compendious description of baptism, to speak of it as a baptism in (or into) the Name of Jesus Christ. (See the Baptismal Service in the Book of Common Prayer.) There does not seem to be any difference of meaning between ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι and εἰς τὸ ὄνομα.

**Ver. 6.—**Had laid his hands, etc. (see ch. viii. 17 and note). We have here a distinct mark of Paul's true apostleship (see ch. viii. 17, 18). For the manifestation of the Spirit, see ch. x. 46.

**Ver. 7.—***They were in all about twelve men for all the men were about twelve, A.V.*

**Ver. 8.—***Entered for went, A.V.; reasoning for disputing, A.V. (διαλεγόμενος, as ver. 9 and ch. xvii. 2, 17; xviii. 4, 19, etc.); as to the things for the things, A.V.* This last is a needless change, since πείθειν properly governs an accusative of the things persuaded or taught, and it is a right English use of "to persuade" to apply it to the thing inculcated. For the use of the phrase "the kingdom of God" as a compendious description of Christian doctrine, see ch. i. 3; viii. 12; xx. 25; xxviii. 23. St. Luke uses the phrase very frequently (Luke vi. 20; viii. 10; ix. 27, 60, 62; x. 11; xi. 20; xiii. 20, 28; xvi. 16; xvii. 20; xxi. 31, etc.).

**Ver. 9.—***Some for divers, A.V.; disobedient for believed not, A.V. (ἠρθεύον, as ch. xiv. 2; xvii. 5, T.R.); speaking for but spake, A.V.; the Way for that way, A.V.; reasoning for disputing, A.V.; Tyrannus for one Tyrannus, A.V.* Were hardened; or, *hardened themselves*. Whether considered as active or middle, the hardening their minds against the reception of the truth was just as voluntary an action as that of one who shuts his eyes that he may not see the light. For the use of σκληρύνειν (Hebrew נָחַץ, applied to the heart or the neck), see Rom. ix. 18; Heb. iii. 8, 15; iv. 7—passages all founded upon the LXX. of Ps. xciv. 8. See also Exod. vii. 22; viii. 19; and Ecclus. xxx. 11, where, as here, disobedience is the consequence of being hardened. Μηποτε σκληρυνθῆις ἀπειθήσῃ σοι, "Lest being hardened he disobey thee." The R.V., by leaving out "were" before "dis-

obedient," and translating as if "hardened" and "disobedient" were two adjectives, destroys this consequence. Speaking evil of; κακολογούντες (see Matt. xv. 4; Mark ix. 39), frequent in the LXX. as the rendering of שָׁחַד (Exod. xxi. 17; 1 Sam. iii. 13), which is otherwise rendered by κακῶς εἶπεν, "as in Lev. xx. 9. It is nearly synonymous with βλασφημεῖν. The Way (as ver. 23; see ch. ix. 2, note). They would speak evil of the gospel by describing it as a blasphemy against God and against Moses, as contrary to the Law, as subversive of all the customs and traditions of the Jews, and so on. He departed. Ἀποστῆς is more than simply "departing;" it implies a withdrawal and separation from fellowship with them, as in 1 Tim. vi. 5 (A.V.), "From such withdraw thyself;" Eccles. vii. 2, "Depart from the unjust" (comp. Luke xiii. 27). Separated the disciples. Hitherto the converted Jews at Ephesus had continued to join their unconverted brethren in the worship of the synagogue; now Paul withdrew them and separated them (ἀφώρισε, Gal. ii. 10). The school of Tyrannus; σχολή, leisure; then, "the employment of leisure," as especially in philosophic discussions and the like; thirdly, the "place" where such discussions were held, a school. It is uncertain whether Tyrannus was a Gentile well known at the time (without the τινός), who kept a lecture-room for philosophic discussions or lectures on rhetoric, or whether he was a Jew who held a private school or meeting in his house—a *beth-midrash*—as was not uncommon in large towns where many Jews were (Lightfoot, vol. iii. p. 236). "*Beth-midrash*—The Jewish divinity school, where their doctors disputed of the more high and difficult matters of the Law" (Index to Lightfoot's Works). It was commonly the upper room in the house of a rabbi (Lightfoot, on ch. ii. 13, vol. viii. 363), whence "house of rabbis" was synonymous with *beth-midrash*, house of discussion. The name Tyrannus occurs in 2 Macc. iv. 40; Josephus, 'Ant. Jud.' xvi. x. 4; 'Bell. Jud.' i. xxvi. 6, of an officer in Herod's body-guard, who might be a Jew or a Greek; and a certain Tyrannus is described by Suidas as a sophist and an author, possibly the same as is here spoken of. Lightfoot, Meyer, Alford, and others think that the Tyrannus here spoken of was a Jew; Lange, Olshausen, Howson, Farrar, Lewin, etc., think he was a Greek philosopher or rhetorician. Some think that "the school of Tyrannus" was the name of the lecture-room from some former teacher (see Renan, p. 345).

**Ver. 10.—***For for by, A.V.; Lord for Lord Jesus, A.V. and T.R.* Two years (see ch. xx. 31, note). Both Jews and Greeks. This mention of Jews is rather in favour of Tyrannus being a Jew, but not decisive.

Ver. 12.—*Inasmuch for so, A.V.; unto the sick were carried away from his body for from his body were brought unto the sick, A.V.; went out for went out of them, A.V. and T.R.* From his body (*χωρός*); literally, the skin, but used here by St. Luke for the body, in accordance with the usage of medical writers “from Hippocrates to Galen” (Hobart). Handkerchiefs; *συνδαιμον*, the Latin word *sudarium*, properly a cloth for wiping off the sweat. It is one of those words, like *κουστωδία*, *κεντυρίων*, *σημικλινθιον*, *κοδραντης*, etc., which exactly represent the political condition of things at the time of the writers, who were living in a country where Greek was the language of common intercourse, but where the dominion was Roman. It is found in Luke xix. 20; John xi. 44; xx. 7, and here. Aprons; *σημικλινθια*, more properly written *σημικλινθια*. It is the Latin word *semicinctum*, a half-girdle; the Greek word is *ἡμικλινθιον*. According to some, it was a narrow girdle, but according to others, and with more probability, an apron covering only half, i.e. the front of the body. It only occurs here in the New Testament or elsewhere. The careful mention of these cures of the sick may also be connected with St. Luke’s medical profession. As regards these unusual modes of miraculous cure, comp. ch. v. 15. It might well be the Divine purpose, in the case of both Peter and Paul, to invest with such extraordinary power the very persons of the apostles who were to stand forth as his messengers and preach in his Name. In St. Paul this parity of miraculous energy stamped his apostleship with an authority equal to that of St. Peter.

Ver. 13.—*But certain also for then certain, A.V.; strolling for vagabond, A.V.; name for call, A.V.; the evil for evil, A.V.; I for we, A.V. and T.R.* Strolling (*περιερχομένων*); going their rounds from place to place, like strolling players or like pedlars. The words should be construed together, “strolling Jewish exorcists.” That certain Jews in our Saviour’s time exorcised evil spirits appears from Matt. xii. 27; Luke ix. 49. We learn also from Josephus, ‘Ant. Jud.’ viii. 2, 5, that forms of exorcism, said to have been invented by King Solomon, so efficacious that the devils cast out by them could never come back, were used with great effect in his days. He adds that he himself knew of an instance in which one of his own countrymen, Elcazar by name, had cast out devils in the presence of Vespasian and his sons and officers and a number of his soldiers. The method used was this: The exorcist applied to the nose of the possessed the bezil of a ring, under which was a certain root prescribed by Solomon, and so drew out the evil spirit through the man’s nostrils.

The possessed then fell to the ground, and the exorcist commanded the evil spirit in the name of Solomon never to return, and then recited one of Solomon’s incantations. To give full assurance to the bystanders that the evil spirit had really left the man, the exorcist placed a vessel full of water at some distance off, and then commanded the ejected spirit to overturn it, which he did. Thus far Josephus. Lightfoot, on ch. xiii. (vol. iii. 215), quotes the book Juchasin as speaking of certain Jews as “skilled in miracles,” and the Jerusalem Talmud as speaking of their enchantments and magical tricks and charms “in the name of Jesus” (see, further, Alford on Matt. xii. 27).

Ver. 14.—*A chief priest for and chief of the priests, A.V.; this for so, A.V.* A chief priest (*ἀρχιερεύς*); not, of course, in the sense of high priest, but in that wider sense of the word which comprised the chiefs of the twenty-four courses and the members of the Sanhedrim and all who had ever been high priests or who were of the kindred of the high priest (see Matt. ii. 4; xvi. 21; xxi. 15; xxiii. 45, etc.; Luke ix. 22; xix. 47, etc.; ch. iv. 23; v. 24; ix. 14, 21, etc.). It is probable that the Eleazar mentioned in the preceding note was a priest, both from his name and because Josephus calls him one of his *δμοφύλων*, which may mean “fellow-tribesmen.” The name *Scæva* occurs nowhere else, nor is its meaning or etymology at all certain. Some identify it with the Latin *Scæva* (Horace, ‘Ep.’ i. xvii. 1), “left-handed,” i.e. *Scævola*; or the Greek *Scœvas*, a proper name in Appian. Simonis gives it an Aramean etymology.

Ver. 15.—*Said unto them for said, A.V. and T.R.*

Ver. 16.—*Mastered both of them for overcame them, A.V. and T.R.*

Ver. 17.—*Became for was, A.V.; both Jews and Greeks for the Jews and Greeks also, A.V.; that dwelt for dwelling, A.V.; upon for on, A.V.* Fear fell upon them. Comp. ch. v. 11—14, where the same effects are ascribed to the death of Ananias and Sapphira and the signs and wonders which were wrought by the apostles at that time. This fear produced by the putting forth of God’s power paralyzed for a time the enemies of the gospel, and enabled believers, as it were, to take possession of their new heritage, just as the miracles at the Red Sea and the destruction of Sihon and Og paralyzed the courage of the Canaanites and enabled the Israelites to take possession of their land (Josh. ii. 9—11). With respect to the incident which caused this fear, it might at first seem inconsistent with our Lord’s saying to the apostles (Luke ix. 49, 50). But the cases were very different. He who cast out devils in the name of Jesus, in the Gospel

does not seem to have had any hostility to the faith, for our Lord speaks of him as one who "is not against us." But these sons of Sceva were among the unbelieving Jews who were "hardened and disobedient;" and if their exorcisms had been permitted to succeed, they would have had power to withstand Paul, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and the very purpose for which miraculous power was given to St. Paul would have been frustrated. Therefore they were discomfited, and the subtle design of Satan to destroy, while seeming to magnify, the Name of Jesus was signally defeated. Comp. the somewhat similar incident at Philippi (ch. xvi. 16—18). Justin Martyr, in his 'Dialogue with Trypho,' quoted by Alford on Matt. xii. 27, speaks of the Jews as exorcising, sometimes in the name of kings (referring, doubtless, to Solomon), sometimes of just men, or of prophets, or of patriarchs. So these men took up the name of Jesus.

Ver. 18.—*Many also of them that had believed for and many that believed, A.V.; confessing and declaring for and confessed and showed, A.V.* Many also of them that had believed. This and the following verse speak of that class of converts who had previously been addicted to magic arts. It gives us a curious view of the extent to which magic prevailed among the Jews at this time. Nor was it less prevalent in heathen Ephesus. The magic formulæ of Ephesus were famous under the name of *Ἑφesia γράμματα* (see Renan, pp. 344, 345, note), and the belief in magic seems to have been universal. Hesychius gives as the names of the oldest Ephesian charms, Askî, Kataskî, Lix, Petrax, Damnameneus, Æsion, which he explains as meaning severally "Darkness," "Light," "the Earth," "the Year," "the Truth" (Lewin, p. 334).

Ver. 19.—*And not a few for many . . . also, A.V.; that practised for which used, A.V.; in the sight of all for before all men, A.V.* That practised curious arts (*τῶν τὰ περίεργα πραξάντων*). The adjective *περίεργος* applied to persons means "a busy-body" (1 Tim. v. 13), one who does what it is not his business to do, and prides into matters with which he has no concern (comp. 2 Thess. iii. 11); applied to things, it means that which it is not anybody's business to attend to, that which is vain and superfluous; and then, by a further extension of meaning, that which is forbidden, and specially magic arts and occult sciences. Fifty thousand pieces of silver. There is a difference of opinion as to what coin or weight is meant. If Greek coinage, which is perhaps natural in a Greek city, fifty thousand drachmæ of silver would be meant, equal to £1875. If Jewish shekels are

meant, the sum would amount to £7000 ('Speaker's Commentary'). It is in favour of drachmæ being meant that, with the exception of Josh. vii. 21 and Judg. xvii. 2, the LXX. always express the word "shekel" or "didrachm" after the numeral and before the word "silver." If St. Luke, therefore, had meant shekels, he would have written *δίδραχμα ἀργυρίου*. But it was the Greek usage to omit the word *δραχμή* before *ἀργυρίου* when the reckoning was by drachmæ (Meyer).

Ver. 20.—*The Lord for God, A.V.* If the R.T. has the true order of the words, they must be construed, *To such an extent, according to the might of the Lord, did the word grow and prevail*, after the analogy of Eph. i. 19. *Κατὰ κράτος*, however, taken by itself, is quite usual, like *κατὰ μικρόν*, καθ' ὑπερβολήν, etc. (Alford), and is rightly rendered "mightily."

Ver. 21.—*Now after for after, A.V.* Purposed in the spirit (*ἔθετο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι*); literally, set, fixed, or arranged it in his spirit, like the Hebrew phrase, *בְּרוּחַ*, in 1 Sam. 12, etc. Similarly of past things, Luke i. 66. *ἔθεντο πάντες . . . ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν*, "laid them up in their hearts" (comp. ch. v. 4). When he had passed through Macedonia, etc. Observe the constant solicitude of Paul to revisit the Churches which he had founded, so as to confirm the disciples in the faith and to consolidate his work (ch. xiv. 21; xv. 36; xvi. 6; 1 Thess. iii. 1—5. etc.). It marks the unrivalled tenderness of his heart toward the disciples. Observe also the insatiable appetite of the apostle for spiritual conquests, and his noble contempt for idleness. He has but just won Ephesus and Asia, and already he undertakes Macedonia and Achaia. Nor does his mind stop there, but reaches on to Jerusalem, then stretches onwards to Rome, and meditates the invasion of Spain. Truly neither Alexander, nor Cæsar, nor any hero of antiquity was a match for this little Benjamite (*paulus*) in the magnanimity of his designs (Bengel).

Ver. 22.—*And having sent for so he sent, A.V.; Timothy for Timotheus, A.V.; he for but he, A.V.; while for season, A.V.* Two of them, etc. Erastus is here mentioned for the first time. If he is the same person who is mentioned in Rom. xvi. 23; 2 Tim. iv. 20, it is probable that he was one of St. Paul's Corinthian converts who had gone with him from Corinth to Jerusalem and Antioch, and had accompanied him through Phrygia

<sup>1</sup> There is no real reason to think "the chamberlain of the city" must be a different person from the Erastus of 2 Tim iv 20 and the one in our text.



and Galatia to Ephesus. Silas, who had been Timothy's companion on the former visit to Macedonia, seems to have left St. Paul, possibly at Jerusalem, from whence he originally came (ch. xv. 22, 32, 34), and to have attached himself to Peter (1 Pet. v. 12). Perhaps he was especially connected with the mission to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, etc., as it appears from the passage just quoted that he was "a faithful brother unto them," A.V.; "or our faithful brother," R.V. He himself stayed, etc. This phrase is in singular harmony with 1 Cor. xvi. 8, which seems clearly to have been written after Timothy's departure for Macedonia and before his arrival at Corinth, since Timothy is not mentioned either in the superscription or among the salutations (1 Cor. i. 1; xvi. 19, 20), and his coming to Corinth is spoken of as doubtful, though probable, in 1 Cor. xvi. 10. Both passages imply a prolongation of Paul's stay at Ephesus beyond his original intention. The special reason for this prolongation of his sojourn at Ephesus, and which is alluded to in 1 Cor. xvi. 9, is thought to be the Artemisian or Ephesian games, which were celebrated at Ephesus in May—and therefore just at this time—and which brought a vast concourse of Ionians to Ephesus. It was at this time, doubtless, that the principal sale of "silver shrines of Diana" took place, and therefore it was natural that Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen should be very angry when they found their usual gains were cut short by the multitude of converts all over Proconsular Asia. We learn from 1 Cor. xvi. 7 that Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus had arrived at Ephesus from Corinth. It is likely that their presence, together with that of Tychicus and Trophimus, two Asiatic converts, enabled St. Paul to dispense with the services of Timothy and Erastus for a time. "Ἐπεσχεν, understand *σεαυτόν*, kept himself back, i.e. stayed; *χρόνον*, a while, an indefinite phrase, but indicating a short time. Herodotus has *ἐπισχοντες ὀλίγας ἡμέρας* (viii. 113), *ἐπισχῶν ὀλίγον χρόνον* (i. 132), and *ἐπισχῶν χρόνον* (ix. 49).

Ver. 23.—*About that time for the same time, A.V.; concerning the Way for about that way, A.V.* (see ver. 9).

Ver. 24.—*Of for, A.V.; little business for small gain, A.V.* Shrines of Diana, or *Artemis*. They were silver models of the famous temple of Diana at Ephesus, and were carried as charms on journeys and placed in people's houses to ensure to them the protection of the goddess (Meyer). These gold or silver shrines contained within them an image of Artemis (Lewin, vol. i. p. 408), as similar ones, which have been found made of terra-cotta, of Cybele (Lewin, p. 414).

Repeated mention is made in Diodorus Siculus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and elsewhere, of gold or silver shrines (*voti*), which were offered to different gods as propitiatory gifts, or carried about by the owners as charms. Business; *ἐργασία*, here and ver. 25 (see ch. xvi. 16, note).

Ver. 25.—*Gathered for called, A.V.; business for craft, A.V.*, but "craft" is the better rendering. Workmen; *ἐργάται*, different from the *τεχνῖται* skilled labourers or artisans. Demetrius called together all who were in any way interested in the shrine trade. His true reason came out first.

Ver. 26.—*And for moreover, A.V.* We have here a wonderful testimony from an enemy to the power and efficacy of St. Paul's labours. Asia, here and in ver. 22, etc., means Proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the chief city. That they be no gods, etc. This is an incidental proof that St. Paul's success at Ephesus lay chiefly among the heathen, since we know from ch. xiv. 15-17; xvii. 23, 24, etc., that this was exactly his style of preaching to Gentiles, quite different from his method with Jews.

Ver. 27.—*And not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute for so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, A.V.; be made of no account for should be despised, A.V.; that she should even be deposed from her magnificence for her magnificence should be destroyed, A.V. and T.R.* Is there danger. There is no example in St. Luke's writings, or in the New Testament, or in the LXX., of *κινδυνεύει* being taken impersonally, as it is sometimes, though rarely, in Greek authors. The subject, therefore, of this sentence is *τὸ μέρος* (the portion, part, or business), and *τοῦτο κινδυνεύει ἡμῖν τὸ μέρος, κ.τ.λ.*, must be construed together, "This trade is in danger for us to come into disrepute," or, put into English, "This our trade is in danger," etc. Come into disrepute; *εἰς ἀπελεγμὸν*, only found here in the New Testament; literally, *into refutation*; hence *into disrepute, or into reproach*, i.e. be a ground of reproach to us who practise it. The great goddess. An epithet especially applied to the Ephesian Diana (comp. the *μεγαλειότητα* at the end of the verse, and the cry, vers. 28 and 34). Lewin (vol. i. p. 412, note) quotes 'Ομνύω τὴν μεγάλην Ἐφεσίων Ἀρτέμιιν in the Ephesian Xenophon; *τῆς μεγάλης Θεᾶς Ἀρτέμιδος*, in an inscription at Ephesus; *Ἀρτεμις ἡ μεγάλη θεὸς* (Achill. Tat.). Add from Pausanias, 4, 31, 8, "All men hold the Ephesian Diana in the greatest honour." From her magnificence. The R.T. reads *τῆς μεγαλειότητος* instead of *τὴν μεγαλειότητα* in the T.R. But Meyer, while he accepts the R.T., construes it "*and some of her magnificence*," etc.; and rightly, because the genitive after *καθαίρειν* should be pre-

ted by ἀπό, as ch. xiii. 29; Josh. viii. 29; x. 27 (LXX.), and the word καθαιρεῖν is also specially used of lowering the honour of any one. All Asia and the world. This is scarcely an hyperbole, the worship of the Ephesian Diana, and of her image reported to have fallen down from heaven, was so very widely diffused.

Ver. 28.—*This for these sayings, A.V.; filled with wrath for full of wrath, A.V.* Great is Diana, etc. A notable instance of assertion and clamour crying down reason and truth.

Ver. 29.—*The city for the whole city, and the confusion for confusion, A.V. and T.R.* (τῆς for ὅλης); *they rushed, etc., having seized for having caught, etc., they rushed, etc., A.V.* With one accord (ὁμοθυμαδόν); see ch. i. 14; ii. 1; iv. 24, etc., and for ὁρμησαν ὁμοθυμαδόν, see ch. vii. 57. Into the theatre. The common place of resort for all great meetings. So Tacitus, 'Hist.,' ii. 80 (quoted by Alford), says that at Antioch the people were wont to hold their public debates in the theatre, and that a crowded meeting was held there to forward the interests of Vespasian, then aspiring to the empire. So Josephus speaks of the people of Antioch holding a public assembly (ἐκκλησίαζοντες) in the theatre ('Bell. Jud.,' vii. iii. 3). The people of the Greek city of Tarentum received the ambassadors from Rome in the theatre, "according to the Greek custom," Val. Max., ii. 2, 5 (Kuinoel, on ch. xix. 29). The theatre at Ephesus, of which "ruins of immense grandeur" still remain, is said to be the largest of which we have any account (Howson, ii. p. 68). Having seized (συναρπάσαντες); a favourite word with Luke (ch. vi. 12; xxvii. 12; Luke viii. 29); and found also in the LXX. of Prov. vi. 25; 2 Macc. iii. 27; iv. 41; but not elsewhere in the New Testament. It is a common medical word of sudden seizures. The force of the συν- is that they hurried Gaius and Aristarchus along with them to the theatre, no doubt intending there to accuse them to the people. Gaius and Aristarchus. In ch. xx. 4 there is mention of a certain *Gaius* who was one of Paul's companions in travel, but who is described as "of Derbe." Again in 1 Cor. i. 14 a Gaius is mentioned as one of St. Paul's converts on his first visit to Corinth, whom he baptized himself; and in Rom. xvi. 23 (written from Corinth) we have mention of Gaius as St. Paul's host, and of the whole Church, likely, therefore, to be the same person. Then we have the Gaius to whom St. John's Third Epistle is addressed, and whose hospitality to the brethren was a conspicuous feature in his character, and one tending to identify him with the Gaius of Rom. xvi. 23. We seem, therefore, to have, in immediate connection with St. Paul, Gaius of Corinth, Gaius

of Macedonia, and Gaius of Derbe. But Gaius (or Caius, as it is written in Latin) was such a common name, and the Jews so often shifted their residence from one city to another, that it is not safe either to infer identity from identity of name, or diversity from diversity of description. *Aristarchus* here described as of Macedonia, is more precisely spoken of in ch. xx. 4 as a Thessalonian. In ch. xxvii. 2, where we find him accompanying St. Paul from Casarea to Rome, he is described as "a Macedonian of Thessalonica." In Col. iv. 10 he is St. Paul's "fellow-prisoner," as voluntarily sharing his prison (Alford, on Col. iv. 10), and in Philem. 24 he is his fellow-labourer. His history, therefore is that, having been converted on St. Paul's visit to Thessalonica, he attached himself to him as one of his missionary staff, and continued with him through good report and evil report, through persecution, violence, imprisonment, shipwreck, and bonds, to the latest moment on which the light of Bible history shines. Blessed servant of Christ! blessed fellow-servant of his chief apostle!

Ver. 30.—*Was minded to enter for would have entered, A.V.* With the courage of a pure conscience, conscious of no wrong, and therefore fearing no wrong, Paul would have gone straight to the theatre, and cast in his lot with Gaius and Aristarchus; but the disciples, knowing the savage temper of the multitude, dissuaded him; and when their entreaties were backed by the magistrates, Paul thought it his duty to yield. To enter in unto the people. Εἰσελθεῖν, or προσελθεῖν, εἰς or ἐπὶ τὸν δῆμον, or τῷ δήμῳ, are phrases implying the intention of pleading his cause before them (see Schleusner and Kuinoel, on ch. xix. 30).

Ver. 31.—*Certain also for certain, A.V.* (the more natural order would be, and certain of the chief officers of Asia also); *chief officers for chief, A.V.; being for which were, A.V.; and besought him not for desiring him that he would not, A.V.* Chief officers of Asia. The Greek word is *Asiarchs* (Ἀσιάρχαι). The Asiarchs, ten in number, were officers annually chosen from all the cities of Proconsular Asia, to preside over all sacred rites, and to provide at their own expense the public games in honour of the gods and of the deity of the emperor. This necessitated their being men of high rank and great wealth, and Schleusner adds that they were priests. The name *Asiarch* is formed like *Luciarchai*, *Syriarchai*, *Phœnicarchai*, etc. We have here another striking proof of the enormous influence of Paul's preaching in Asia, that some of these very officers who were chosen to preside over the sacred rites of the gods, and to advance their honour by public games, were now on Paul's side.

Ver. 32.—*In confusion for confused*, A.V. (συγκεχυμένη; comp. συγχύσεως, ver. 29). The more part, etc. A graphic picture of an excited mob led by interested and designing agitators.

Ver. 33.—*Brought for drew*, A.V. and T.R.; *a defence for his defence*, A.V. (ἀπολογεῖσθαι). Alexander. Some think he is the same as "Alexander the coppersmith," of whose conduct St. Paul complains so bitterly (2 Tim. iv. 14, 15; 1 Tim. i. 20), and he may or may not be. It seems likely that, as St. Paul's offence was speaking against the gods and their temples, the Jews, who were commonly accused of being atheists, and one of whose nation Paul was, came in for their share of the popular odium. They were anxious, therefore, to excuse themselves before the people of having had any share in St. Paul's work, and put forward Alexander, no doubt a clever man and a good speaker, to make their defence. But as soon as the people knew that he was a Jew, they refused to listen to him, and drowned his voice with incessant shouts of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Meyer, however, thinks he was a Christian, because of the word ἀπολογεῖσθαι. The people (δῆμος, as ver. 30). It was a true ἐκκλησία, though an irregular one, and the people who formed it were the δῆμος, different from the ὄχλος, the mere crowd outside.

Ver. 34.—*Perceived for knew*, A.V. (ἐπιγινώσκων, to recognize; see ch. iii. 10; iv. 13).

Ver. 35.—*Quieted the multitude* (τὸν ὄχλον) *for appeased the people*, A.V.; *said for said*, A.V.; *who for that*, A.V.; *temple-keeper for a worshipper*, A.V.; *Diana for goddess* Diana, A.V. and T.R. The town-clerk (ὁ γραμματεὺς); i.e. the scribe, is the city secretary. "Ὁ γραμματεὺς τῆς πόλεως, Thucyd., vii. 19 (Meyer); τοῦ γραμματέως τοῦ δήμου, inscription quoted by Howson (vol. ii. p. 76, note). His office, as appears from the passage in Thucydides, was to read public documents to the people. According to some, it was not a post of much dignity at Athens (Becker, on Thucyd., vii. 10); but according to Kuinoel it was an office of first-rate influence in the senate in the Greek cities of Asia, seeing the scribe was the chief registrar, had the drafting of the laws, and the custody of the archives. As there were three orders of scribes, there may have been a great difference in the political rank of each. Had quieted (κατατείλας, and κατεσταλένους, ver. 36). Κατατέλλω means to "arrange," "put in order," the hair, the dress, or the like; hence "to restrain," "quiet;" found only in these two places in the New Testament, but not uncommon in the Maccabees and in Josephus. In classical Greek, ὁ κατεσταλένους is a man of calm, quiet demeanour, as opposed to

ὁ τολμηρός, one who is bold and violent. In medical language, κατατέλλω is to soothe, calm, etc., and φάρμακα κατασταλτικά and ἀνασταλτικά are medicines which check the growth of diseases, ulcers, eruptions, and the like. Temple-keeper, in R.V. and margin of A.V. (νεωκόρος); literally, *temple-keeper*, from νεός, a temple, and κορέω, to sweep. The word *Neocorus* was a peculiar title, assumed first by persons and then by such cities, in Asia especially, as had the special charge of the temple and sacred rites of any particular god. It first appears on coins of Ephesus, in the reign of Nero, and was deemed a title of great honour. One inscription speaks of ὁ νεωκόρος (Ἐφεσίων) δῆμος as making a certain dedication. But another use of the term sprang up about this time. Among the vile flatteries of those corrupt times, it became usual with cities to dedicate temples and altars to the emperors, and they received in return the title, meant to be an honour, of νεωκόρος of the emperor. Some extant coins exhibit the city of Ephesus as νεωκόρος both of Diana and the emperor (see Lewin, vol. i. p. 411; Howson, vol. ii. pp. 75, 76). The image which fell down from Jupiter (τοῦ Διοπετοῦς, understand ἀγάλματος, as in the 'Iphig. in Taur.,' 947), Διοπετὲς λαβεῖν ἄγαλμα; which is described in ver. 88 of the same play as "the image (ἄγαλμα) of the goddess Diana, which they say fell down from heaven (οὐρανοῦ πεσεῖν ἀπὸ) into her temple in Tauris;" and in line 1349 it is called Οὐρανοῦ πέσμα, τῆς Διὸς κόρης ἄγαλμα, "The image of the daughter of Jove which fell from heaven," brought away from Tauris by Iphigenia and Orestes into Attica. But it does not appear that there was any tradition that the identical image brought from Tauris was carried to Ephesus. There are several representations of the Ephesian Diana, or Artemis, on coins, of which one or two are given by Lewin (vol. i. p. 411) and by Howson (vol. ii. p. 66). The image was of rude form and execution, mummy-shaped, or like an inverted pyramid; πολυμαστή (rendered by St. Jerome *multi-mammia*, and explained as intending to represent her as the nourisher of all living things: Preface to Ephesians); made of wood variously described as ebony, cedar, and vine wood. Pliny says that, though the temple itself had been restored seven times, the image had never been altered (quoted by Kuinoel).

Ver. 36.—*Gainsaid for spoken against*, A.V.; *rash for rashly*, A.V. (προπετῶς is the adverb). Quiet (κατεσταλένους; see above, ver. 35, note).

Ver. 37.—*Temples for churches*, A.V.; *not for nor yet*, A.V.; *our for your*, A.V. Ye have brought, etc. Ἄγειν is especially used of "bringing before a magistrate,"



"leading to execution," etc. (Luke xxi. 12; xxiii. 1; ch. vi. 12; xvii. 19; xviii. 12; Mark xiii. 11). Robbers of temples; *ιερόσυλοι*, found only here in the New Testament. The verb *ιεροσυλεῖν* occurs in Rom. ii. 22. Blasphemers of our goddess. If the A.V. is right, perhaps we may see in the phrase "your goddess" an indication that the town-clerk himself was more or less persuaded by St. Paul's preaching, that "they are no gods which are made with hands," and did not care to speak of Diana as his own goddess. It appears also that St. Paul had not launched out into abuse of the heathen gods in general, or Diana in particular, but had preached the more excellent way by faith in Jesus Christ, to draw them from their idols (1 Thess. i. 9).

Ver. 38.—*If therefore for wherefore if, A.V.; that for which, A.V.; the courts are for the law is, A.V.; proconsuls for deputies, A.V.; accuse for implead, A.V.* Against any man. Mark the skill with which the town-clerk passes from the concrete to the abstract, and avoids the mention of Paul's name. The courts are open; *ἀγοραί* (or *ἀγοραῖοι*) *ἄγονται*. Some supply the word *σύνδοι*, and make the sense "judicial assemblies," "sessions," coming round at proper fixed intervals. But the verb *ἄγονται*, more naturally suggests *ἡμέραι*, as Bengel says (*ἄγειν γενέσια: τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς σκηνοπηγίας: Ὀλύμπια: γενέθλιον*, etc.), and then the meaning is, "The regular court-days are kept, when the proconsul attends to try causes;" there is no need to have an irregular trial. So Suidas explains it, *ἡμέρα ἐν ᾗ ἡ ἀγορὰ τελεῖται*. There are proconsuls. Bengel, with whom Meyer agrees, thinks the plural denotes the unbroken succession of proconsuls. But Lewin thinks it may mark the exact time of these transactions as being immediately after the poisoning of the Proconsul Junius Silanus by order of Agrippina, when the two procurators, Celer and Ælius, exercised the proconsular power till the appointment of another proconsul, according to a law of Claudius to that effect. Others have other explanations.

Ver. 39.—*Seek for inquire, A.V.; about for concerning, A.V.; settled for determined, A.V.; the regular for a lawful, A.V.* If ye seek, etc. (*ἐπιζητεῖτε*). *Ἐπιζητεῖν* means either "to make inquiry" or "to desire earnestly." The verb in the next clause, *ἐπιλυθῆσεται*, it shall be "settled," or "solved," favours the first sense: "If you wish to inquire further into the spread of Paul's doctrine, and the best way of dealing with it, the question should be decided in an assembly of the *δῆμος*, legally convened." For *περὶ ἑτέρων*, about other matters, some manuscripts read *πραιτέρω*, further. The regular assembly. That summoned by a magistrate in the constitutional way. The Greek cities

under the Roman government preserved their rights and liberties, and the privilege of popular assemblies. The town-clerk, therefore, gave them their choice of either having the case tried before the proconsuls or having it laid before the *ecclesia* of the *demos*, if they wished it to be gone into on wider and deeper grounds.

Ver. 40.—*For indeed for for, A.V.; accused for called in question, A.V.; concerning for for, A.V.; riot for uproar, A.V.; for it for whereby, A.V.; and as touching it we shall not be able to for we may, A.V. and T.R.; account for an account, A.V.* We are in danger (*κινδυνεύομεν*; see ver. 27, note). To be accused concerning this day's riot. The Greek cannot well be so construed. The margin is right; *ἐγκαλεῖσθαι στάσεως* is "to be charged with sedition;" *περὶ τῆς σήμερον* is for *τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας*, "this day," as in ch. xx. 26, *τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ*: only in English we should say, "on account of this day," i.e. what has been done this day. The R.T. places a stop after *μηδενὸς αἰτίου ὑπάρχοντος*. As touching it. But "it" must mean "the riot," which is feminine, whereas *οὗ* is masculine; so that the R.T. is impossible to construe. It is much better, therefore, to adhere to the T.R., which has good manuscript authority, and to construe as the A.V. *Whereby*, equivalent to "on the ground of which" (Meyer).

With regard to the great tumult to which the foregoing narrative relates, it is certain that St. Luke has by no means exaggerated its importance. In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, written from Macedonia shortly after his departure from Ephesus, St. Paul speaks as one still smarting under the severity of his sufferings. In the language of trust, yet of a trust sorely tried, he speaks of the Father of mercies "who comforteth us in all our tribulation." He speaks of the sufferings of Christ as abounding in him. And then, referring directly to the trouble which came upon him in Asia, he says, "We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death" (2 Cor. i. 4—10). And the same tone breaks out again in 2 Cor. iv. 7—18; vi. 4—10; xi. 23—27; xii. 9, 10. It is also very probable that it was on this occasion that Priscilla and Aquila saved St. Paul's life at the risk of their own, to which he alludes in Rom. xvi. 3, 4, written after he had reached Corinth from Macedonia, i.e. before Easter of the year 58 A.D. So that it is certain that the riot and the danger to St. Paul's life were even greater than we should have inferred from St. Luke's narrative alone.

It should be added, with reference to the three years' residence at Ephesus (ch. xx. 21) which this nineteenth chapter describes, that one or two important incidents which occurred are not related by St. Luke. The first is that encounter with a savage rabble to which St. Paul refers in 1 Cor. xv. 32, but of which we have no account in the Acts. It must have happened in the early part of his sojourn at Ephesus. Another is a probable visit to Corinth, inferred from 2 Cor. ii. 1; xii. 14, 21; xiii. 1, 2; and thought to have been caused by bad accounts of the moral state of the Corinthian Church, sent to him at Ephesus. It was probably a hasty visit, and in contrast with it he says, in 1

Cor. xvi. 7, with reference to his then coming visit, "I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you." It is also thought that there was another letter to the Corinthians, written from Ephesus, soon after that second visit, which is now lost, but is alluded to in 1 Cor. v. 9. The First Epistle to the Corinthians was manifestly written at this time from Ephesus (see 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 19). Some think that the Epistle to the Galatians was also written from Ephesus, a little before the First Epistle to the Corinthians (see 1 Cor. xvi. 1; Gal. ii. 10); but Renan thinks it was written from Antioch, before he came to Ephesus.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—20.—*The advance.* The founding of a Church at Ephesus, the capital city of Proconsular Asia—a great centre of Greek and Asiatic life, civil, religious, and commercial, the seat of the famous temple of Artemis, the place of concourse of all Ionia for its celebrated games—is one of those great epochs in the history of Christianity which arrest the attention and demand the consideration of the Christian reader. Not above two years (if so much) had elapsed since the Holy Ghost had expressly prohibited the preaching of the Word in Asia, for reasons which we know not; but now that prohibition is removed, and, after a preliminary movement by Apollos, we find St. Paul planting his foot firmly on the soil of Asia, and taking possession in the Name of the Lord Jesus. The banner which he then set up has never been taken down to this present hour. What the influence of the great success of St. Paul's ministry at Ephesus upon other Asiatic cities may have been, we have no means of knowing in detail; but that it was very great and widespread we learn from the tenth, twentieth, and twenty-sixth verses of this chapter. The first, second, and third chapters of the Revelation of St. John supply further important evidence, both as regards Ephesus itself and the other Churches of Asia; and so do the two Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy. From hence St. John exercised his jurisdiction over the whole of the Churches of Asia. The Epistle of Ignatius to the Church of Ephesus (A.D. 107) carries on the tradition; and we learn from later ecclesiastical history how important a position Ephesus held, being styled *ἡ πρώτη καὶ μεγίστη μητρόπολις τῆς Ἀσίας*. The third general council was held there in A.D. 431. In thus casting a hasty glance at the succeeding history of this apostolic Church, we are led to the reflection how little we know what may be the consequences of any single forward movement in the kingdom of God. The humblest servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, in a meeting with a few like-minded brethren, may be laying the foundation of institutions which will last while the Church lasts, and exercise a world-wide influence upon the destinies of mankind. A mission to a race of semi-barbarians may be the planting of a Church under whose shadow millions may hereafter walk in all the joy of Christian hope, and in all the beauty of Christian holiness. The simplest word spoken in the kingdom of God, the simplest action taken in the Name of the Lord Jesus, may be the instrument used by the power of God for advancing his own purposes of grace and salvation to untold multitudes. When Augustine had his first interview with King Ethelbert in the city of the men of Kent (Cant-wara-byrig), who could have foreseen the influence upon the Christianity and civilization of the world which that interview was destined to exercise? And so in the case of every fresh effort to preach Christ where he is not known, there is a glorious uncertainty as to the ultimate consequences of such advance. The missionaries' stammering speech telling the story of the cross to a handful of heathen may be the first step of a mighty change which shall make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. One Heaven-born thought in the mind of a man of God, one prayer in the Holy Ghost, one faithful word of truth, may be the seed of a sacred

history which shall fill, not earth only, but heaven also with enduring fruits of joy and salvation. Let St. Paul himself make the application: "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

Vers. 21—41.—*The greed of gain.* Several instructive lessons crop up from this narrative. When two people advancing from opposite directions meet in a narrow pathway, one must give way to the other. When the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ encounters the greed of gain in a human breast, either the Word, with its promises, its hopes, its commands, must stand aside that the love of money may pursue its onward course, or the worldly gain must become as dung in the eyes of the hearer of the Word. We have noble examples in such men as Moses, Elisha, Daniel, Nehemiah, Zacchæus, Peter and the other apostles, Barnabas, Paul, and many more both in ancient and modern times, of that contempt of worldly gains in comparison with the treasures of heaven, which marks the true servant of the living God. But we have, on the other hand, many sad though instructive instances of the love of gain holding its ground and barring the entrance into the heart of love and obedience to God. It was so in the instance recorded in this section. Here was the blessed gospel of God's redeeming grace preached with extraordinary power by St. Paul, confirmed by signal miracles, attested by the conversion of multitudes, glorified by the open confession and the voluntary losses of so many professors of curious arts; it was presented with a power and a beauty to the minds of the Ephesians which seemed to be irresistible. What sweet lessons of godliness, what glorious promises of immortality, what captivating revelations of the goodness and love of God, did that gospel contain! It could set men free from sin; it could raise them to fellowship with angels; it could give them the victory over the very grave. But when Demetrius heard it he saw in it one fatal blot which obliterated all its excellences: it would destroy the trade in silver shrines. Let men once be convinced that there is one true and living God, the Lord of heaven and earth, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, and that to know him and love and serve him is eternal life, and there would be an end of the worship of the great goddess Diana of the Ephesians. The strangers who flocked to the pan-Ionian games would no longer crowd to the shop of Demetrius, that they might carry home with them a silver shrine; silver ornaments would no more be devoted to beautify the famous temple; the skill of the craftsmen would no longer bring them honour and respect; the faith of Jesus Christ would be the death-blow to the magnificence of Diana and to the gains of her workmen. Therefore the faith of Christ must be resisted. It must be kept out of the workmen's heart, and it must be crushed that it spread no more. The true cry was—Our gains are in danger! The pretended cry was—The honour of Diana is at stake! And this leads us to the further remark that selfish greed seldom dares show itself without disguise. It has an instinctive consciousness of its own unworthiness as a motive of action, and even of its repulsiveness in the eyes of others. It must therefore always put on some cloak of hypocrisy. It must simulate zeal for God or benevolence towards man. It must pretend to be seeking some end very different from the true one, or at least one to which the true end is quite subordinate. Even if it admit that "this our craft is in danger," it puts forward as the supreme danger that "her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." And this teaches us the importance of a very close scrutiny of our own motives of action, when our worldly interests are concerned. It is astonishing how much men's judgment and their powers of discrimination are affected by considerations of interest. It is, perhaps, less common for men to act deliberately against their conviction of what is just and right than to be biassed in their opinion of what is right by the disturbing force of self-interest. The man whose real aim through life is to do what is right and accept what is true, quite irrespective of any influence which his belief or his action may have upon his own temporal gains, should spare no pains to maintain a judgment quite independent of selfish considerations, and to force his conscience always to give a true verdict upon the evidence before it, unmoved by fear of loss, and unseduced by hopes of gain. Once more, the example of the Ephesian silversmiths supplies a caution, not unneeded to all Christians, against supposing that "godliness is a way of gain."



A large part of the corruptions of Christianity, and of the scandalous lives of worldly minded clergy in all ages, has arisen from the attempt to make religion a source of individual gain and aggrandizement. Legacies extorted from death-bed terrors, preferment gained by unworthy means, the sale of indulgences, paid Masses for the dead, the huge treasures accumulated by divers pretences at the shrines of saints, and many other infamous devices to make religion lucrative to the professors of it, are examples of what I mean. The man of God and the chaste Church of Christ must flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. These are the Christian's treasures, the results of his craft, the rewards of his labours. These are the branches which grow on the stem of heavenly truth, and with these alone can he be satisfied. He covets not the wages of unrighteousness; he cares not for the silver shrines; he frames not his creed either to catch the gifts of the wealthy, or to secure the praises of the world. The practical lesson to the Christian tradesman is to beware lest the interests of his trade lead him into any antagonism with the requirements of the gospel. Certain gains may be incompatible with perfect integrity, or with a supreme regard for the honour of God, or with true love to man. Let the Christian tradesman look to it that he is always ready to sacrifice his gains to his higher Christian obligations. His willingness to do so is the test of his Christian sincerity, and it is a severe test. The voice of a thriving, growing, swelling business is a loud voice, and the fear of checking a trade and losing all is a very telling fear. The cry of a feeble business, crying for more aliment and a wider field, is a very pressing cry. Let the voice of conscience, and duty, and fealty to Christ be louder and more pressing still, so that the silver shrines may pale before the claims of the supreme Lord of all, and the treasures of the world may become as dung before the glory of the righteousness of the children of God.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—7.—*Essential but insufficient; valuable but temporary.* We have here, in connection with the Christian faith and with Christian work—

I. THE ESSENTIAL BUT THE INSUFFICIENT. (Vers. 1—5.) At Ephesus Paul met with disciples who had been baptized "unto John's baptism" (ver. 3), but who had not learnt to exercise faith in Jesus Christ, nor even heard that there was a Holy Ghost (ver. 2). These men were well on the way to salvation by Jesus Christ, but they were far from the goal. Repentance is essential, but it is not sufficient of itself. 1. It is essential; for without it the heart remains estranged from God, the soul turned from self and sin, the life unrelieved of that which is false and wrong; and without it there is no sense of that spiritual need which welcomes a Divine Saviour with humility and trust, which rejoices in a Divine Lord to whom full submission may be made. The Christian preacher who does not enforce repentance is fatally lacking in his duty; the Christian disciple who has not experienced it is fatally short of fulfilling the condition of acceptance with God. 2. It is not sufficient; for (1) it leaves the soul without any pledge of Divine forgiveness; (2) it leaves the heart without that personal union with a Divine Redeemer in which consists the very essence of spiritual and eternal life; (3) it leaves the spirit of man without the abiding indwelling and quickening influence of the Spirit of God. Therefore let the Christian teacher make much of the distinctive doctrine of the faith he preaches, and continually testify not only "repentance towards God," but "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. xx. 21).

II. THE VALUABLE BUT THE TEMPORARY. (Ver. 6.) "When Paul had laid his hand upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues," etc. It was desirable, then, that the presence and power of the Divine Spirit should be manifested by "signs and wonders." It was, at that stage of the progress of the gospel, a very valuable contribution to its triumph; it gave assurance to those on whom he came, and evidence to those who "were without." Experience soon proved (e.g. the Corinthian Church) that this order of evidence and influence was open to abuse, and that it was not of the kind that could be permanent in the Church. 1. We can plainly see that in these days it would be practically useless: it would be, to ordinary observers, indistinguishable from the jugglery and affectations of the impostor. 2. God has

given us that which is better, with which we may well be content, and for the perfection of which we should strive and pray. He gives us, as the consequence of our faith and as the response to our believing prayer, quickening influences in the soul; a Divine action upon and within the spirit, of the actual working of which we are not usually conscious at the moment of operation, but the effects of which are obvious to ourselves and to others. They are these: (1) an assurance of sonship (Rom. viii. 16); (2) a desire to bear witness unto Christ, so that without any gift of tongues we shall overcome all obstacles, and speak of him and for him; (3) a holy heart and a beautiful life (Gal. v. 22; Eph. v. 9).—C.

Vers. 8—17.—*The spiritual, the supernatural, and the natural.* The faithful labours of Paul in the synagogue of the Jews and the room of Tyrannus, the unusually extensive employment of the miraculous, and the discomfiture of the exorcists suggest to us—

I. THAT THE SUPERNATURAL IS TO BE SUBORDINATED TO THE SPIRITUAL. (Vers. 8—12.) We remember how our Lord refused to gratify the unworthy craving for signs and wonders in his day: "There shall no sign be given to this generation" (Mark viii. 12); repeatedly he discouraged the demand for the miraculous, because it interfered with the teaching of truth, and so with the furtherance of his spiritual work. We find Paul making comparatively little of these great "gifts;" his chronicler does not enlarge on them, but disposes of them in very few words, no doubt reproducing and reflecting thus the mind of the apostle; he himself does not make a single allusion to them in his address to the elders at Miletus (ch. xx.); he disparages rather than magnifies their importance in his Epistles (2 Cor. xiii., xiv.). We are led to feel that the "special miracles wrought by the hands of Paul" are of very secondary value, as compared (ver. 11) with his diligence in "persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God" (ver. 8), and with his enterprise and zeal in so acting that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (ver. 10). We need not sigh for departed times when the gospel had some sanctions and supports which it has not now. All that is of first importance, all that is truly redemptive and Divine, abides with the Church of Christ, and will remain for ever. 1. The knowledge of the living and saving truth. 2. The love of it, and joy in it. 3. The privilege of making it known. 4. The accessibility of those heavenly influences which make it powerful and efficacious to our own hearts and to the souls of those whom we address.

II. THAT THE NATURAL CANNOT DO THE SPECIAL WORK OF THE SPIRITUAL. These exorcists (ver. 13) had probably been so far successful that they had induced their fellow-citizens to believe that in them resided a strange power over the insane or the possessed. But when they used the name of Jesus in order to effect their object, they failed signally and disgracefully. In this respect they are types of those who attempt to do God's work without Divine weapons. Only the spiritual can do spiritual work. It is true that unspiritual men may (1) understand much of the Divine thought; (2) speak what they know with skill and force; (3) assume a sacred tone and spirit, and may affect men by that assumption; (4) maintain for years a reputation for devotion and usefulness. But it is also true that (1) if any spiritual result should follow, it will be through the overruling power of God,—it will not be their work, in any true sense; (2) no considerable or permanent results will follow,—such unreal conditions will not stand the test of time; (3) there will come exposure and humiliation, either here or hereafter. Wherefore let us honour the spiritual as that which is the one true, abiding Divine power. Let us: (1) Welcome to our heart the first teachings and leadings of the Divine Spirit. (2) Establish our whole life on the basis of the spiritual; live and walk "in the Spirit," as those who realize that outward shows are as nothing to the great spiritual realities. (3) Do the work of God with spiritual weapons; not attempting to build up the kingdom of God by bodily benefits, political economies, or human philosophies. These have their place and their work, as handmaids and auxiliaries, and are by no means to be despised. But the Christian minister must make men "hear the words of the Lord Jesus," must speak of those things which distinctively "concern the kingdom of God;" he must utter specially Christian doctrine, and look for positively Divine influence.—C.

Vers. 18—20.—*The sign of sincerity.* We are reminded by the text—

I. THAT WHEN WE ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST WE YIELD OURSELVES TO HIM. To exercise a living faith in him is to take everything from him and to give everything to him; therefore to *give ourselves* to him and to his service. It is to recognize and respond to his supreme claims on heart and life.

II. THAT TO GIVE OURSELVES TO CHRIST MEANS TO ABANDON ALL THAT IS HATEFUL TO HIM. How can we love him and not hate and shun the things which are painful and offensive in his sight?

III. THAT TO ABANDON WHAT IS HATEFUL TO CHRIST IS TO PUT AWAY ALL THAT IS FALSE AND IMPURE. To live a life of imposture; to be systematically enriching ourselves at the expense of the credulity of others (as these Ephesians had been doing); to be acting falsehoods daily, or even frequently; to be introducing a large measure of vanity or folly into that which should be good and pure;—*this* is hateful to him who is the holy and the true One; this is unendurable by him in one who bears his name and professes to be like him and to follow him.

IV. THAT TO PUT ASIDE THAT WHICH IS PROFITABLE OR PLEASANT FOR CHRIST'S SAKE IS A SURE SIGN OF SINCERITY. The burning of these profitable "books" was the very best guarantee that could be given of the sincerity of the Ephesian converts. If we want to know how deep and true is a man's conviction, we do not ask what strong things he can say in its favour, or how eloquently he can descant upon it, or what fervour he shows on one or two occasions respecting it, but *how much he is prepared to part with on its account.* We ask what deep-rooted habits he will cut away, what cherished treasures he will put aside, what keen enjoyments he will forego, what money he will sacrifice, what prized but hurtful friendships he will surrender. This is the test of sincerity. A man that will do one or more of these things, "we know the proof of him."

V. THAT DELIBERATE SELF-SACRIFICE IS THE MOST APPRECIATED WITNESS WE CAN BEAR FOR CHRIST. "So mightily grew the word of God," etc. (ver. 20). There is no way by which we can so powerfully affect the judgment and win the sympathy of men as by sacrificing for Christ's sake that which all men prize and strive for. When the world sees all who "profess and call themselves Christians" not only engaging in devotion, and endeavouring to make converts, but also denying themselves pleasures they would otherwise enjoy, spending on others the money they would else have spent on themselves, foregoing worldly advantages which they cannot conscientiously appropriate, then it will be convinced by arguments which now are without any cogency, and will be won by persuasions which now are urged in vain.—C.

Vers. 21—41.—*The supreme conflict.* Of all the struggles which have occurred or are now taking place in the human world, there is not one which deserves to be named in comparison with that supreme conflict which is proceeding between Divine truth and human error, between holiness and sin, between Christ and "the world." We are reminded here of—

I. ONE STRONG ADVERSARY WHICH HAS TO BE OVERCOME. The world will never be renovated until many strong "interests" have been bravely encountered and utterly overthrown. The gospel of Christ cannot be proclaimed in its fulness without giving occasion for many to say, here and there, now and again, "This our craft is in danger" (ver. 27). It is the inevitable tendency of all purifying truth, not only to eradicate evil from the hearts of men, but to bring to nought the hurtful institutions of the world. But by these men live; with these their material interests are closely bound up. Whether it be "drunkenness, slavery, or war," which have been declared to be "the three great evils which have cursed mankind," or whether it be any other harmful thing which Christ purposes to overthrow, his truth must occasionally and incidentally assail the temporal interests and prospects of men. And such is our human nature that, when it does this, it will call forth the most bitter, vehement, crafty, determined opposition. It is in this incidental way that Christ comes, "not to send peace on earth, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). And we may learn (1) that it is doubtful whether we are declaring the whole counsel of God, if we are provoking no hostility by our utterance; (2) that we need not wonder that the coming of the kingdom of God is delayed when we take this envenomed hostility into account.



**II. THE SUCCESS OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH, NOTWITHSTANDING.** By the confession of Demetrius: "This Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people," etc. (ver. 26). There may have been a note of exaggeration in his speech, but it is a significant fact that these "shrines" were in much smaller request in consequence of Paul's preaching. Truth will tell, sooner or later. Against all prejudices, material interests, social habits, civil laws, military forces, it will ultimately prevail. Imperceptibly at first, but in growing numbers and accelerating force, it wins its way until it is accepted, honoured, crowned.

**III. THE SUBTLETY OF SIN.** When the silversmiths of Ephesus find their craft in danger, they say so, plainly enough, while they confer together; but when they face the populace, they disguise their selfishness under the cloak of piety, and cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (ver. 29). Sin sometimes fights without any mask at all; it shows itself in its native hideousness,—the rank, foul, selfish, shameful thing it is. But usually it seeks to conceal its ugliness by draping itself in something which is elegant and becoming. It affects piety, benevolence, patriotism; it is concerned for the comfort, the temporal necessities, or even the spiritual well-being of the world. God strikes through such miserable pretences with his penetrating eye, and it is often open to our human intelligence to recognize the hateful features beneath the graceful folds.

**IV. THE WEAPONS OF DIVINE WISDOM.** These are three, as suggested here. 1. *Prudence.* This is least in virtue and value; but it is not unimportant. The town-clerk of Ephesus is a model of the politic in behaviour and address (vers. 35—41); what he employed so admirably in the discharge of his secular duty, we may use advantageously in the fulfilment of our high mission. The disciples of Ephesus showed a wise prudence in not suffering Paul to enter the theatre; humanly speaking, they saved his life (ver. 30). He himself prudently left the city after this great disturbance. We may be and should be politic and prudent when our caution is not cowardice nor faithlessness (John xvi. 8). 2. *Courage.* Paul was ready to go into the midst of the excited, violent, murderous multitude (ver. 30). The same unflinching courage carried him over perilous seas, into dangerous countries, among hostile peoples,—everywhere, if only he saw the Master's pointing finger or heard the cry of spiritual distress. 3. *Faithfulness.* It was the preaching of the cross, the telling of the old, old story of redeeming love, whatever the Jew might demand or the Gentile crave, which was the source and secret of the apostle's power.—C.

**VERS. 1—7.—Paul and the Baptist's disciples.** **I. LESSONS FROM PAUL IN THIS RELATION.** His care for souls is comprehensive, zealous, and wise. 1. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost?" Is your religion genuine? Is it profound? Is it a living consciousness of God within the soul? Or a dependence on forms, on creeds, on ideas merely? How many trained and taught as Christians must answer, "We know not yet the Holy Spirit"! the new birth, the love, "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"! 2. "In whom were ye then baptized?" A question also for us. What means the name "Christian" that you bear? Is the devil and all his works daily renounced? Baptism reminds us of God the Father, and of childhood to him; of God the Son, and of redemption through his blood; of God the Holy Spirit, and of the temple we ought spiritually to be. Let us ask ourselves the questions Paul asked of the disciples of the Baptist.

**II. LESSONS FROM THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.** 1. They are typical, as we have seen, of many among us; and those who resemble them among us should be treated in like manner. There are those who stand upon a lower step of faith. They know that the gospel requires them to give up sin; perhaps not yet that it calls them to the perfect trust and the love that casts out fear. They confess themselves ignorant if questioned of this "higher life." 2. The testing question. A living faith, a life in conformity with the baptismal profession, a sanctified speech and life, give the only satisfactory answer. 3. The unity of all disciples under one Master. "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren." Human teachers impart their words, Christ his Spirit. Human teachers lay the foundation, give the elements; he leads on to perfection, guides to the goal. Many are the schools of philosophy, one is the Church of Jesus Christ.—J.

Vers. 8—20.—*Work of Paul at Ephesus.* Here we have the victory of the Divine Word over the power of falsehood and evil in the minds of men. Such episodes show on a small scale what the effect of the evangelical leaven is in the world on a large scale.

I. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL SEEN IN THE ACTIVITY OF PAUL. It becomes a two-edged sword in his hand against all the powers of darkness. Three months' continuous preaching of great evangelical truths may lay the foundation of spiritual building for the lifetime of many souls. In three relations this influence of the gospel is felt: (1) upon the hard and unbelieving hearts (vers. 8—10); (2) upon forms of sickness; (3) upon the dark works of godless magic. 1. With reference to the first, he refused to throw pearls before swine. Or, like a faithful shepherd, he separated the untainted sheep from the rest of the flock, that they might not be injured. To attempt in act or thought to separate or excommunicate individuals from the true Church is a usurpation of Divine authority; a violent plucking of the supposed tares from the wheat. It is a different thing to go apart one's self from those believed to be in error. This is an exercise of personal liberty; the former an encroachment on the rights of others. 2. With reference to the second, it appears to have been the vital health of the inspired apostle which opposed and conquered bodily sickness. Not relics of a dead man, but clothes of a living man, were the instruments of the cure. The means are of slight importance when the Divine power is present. It was not Peter's shadow at Jerusalem (ch. v. 15), nor here at Ephesus Paul's handkerchief, which wrought the cures, but the living spiritual force in the will, that is, the faith of the worker. The Roman relic-worshipper expects life from dead things, salvation from that which in the nature of things has no healing power. Nor is the expectation of life and spiritual health from rites and ceremonies more reasonable. The service of dead works is placed in the room of the inward organ of a living faith. 3. The third mode of St. Paul's activity: the people placed in trust of God's Word had fallen into the practice of the most foolish magic arts. The impostors' mode imitate the apostle's. Not in teaching the truth nor in converting souls, but in aping the wondrous deeds of the apostle, so seeking to secure a like credit. 'Tis the way of all false teachers and spurious imitators; they can mimic the gesture, cannot catch the spirit. The counterfeit is *all but* the original; but an immense chasm lies in that *all but*! "Jesus whom Paul preaches." The faith of very many is but a faith in the faith of some one else—a dependence on hearsay, like that of these teachers. And this is weakness itself. The "seven sons of the high priest" may remind us of the old commonplace that external association with sacred things is not always favourable to piety. On the contrary, the old proverb says, "The nearer the church, the further from God." This is an extreme way of stating a patent truth. But the evil spirit defies the feeble imitator, will not yield to his spells, knows the difference between the man filled with and the man empty of God. If we advance to the combat without a call and without an inspiration, we shall incur humiliation. We cannot create an inspiration, nor call ourselves. "Paint a fire; it will not therefore burn." Mock enthusiasm will be found out. "Jesus and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Try to preach without believing your own doctrine, speak of Jesus as a Friend while the heart is averse from him; the mocking voice of the fiend will be heard within, and efforts to convince others will be as the blows of one that fighteth the air. The lie of the heart will paralyze the mightiest eloquence; but the simple truth of the conscience will be a power made manifest in weakness. The false teachers are impotent in the presence and before the attack of the passionate evil spirit; they are overpowered, and flee naked and wounded out of the house. The devil is a thankless master, and puts to shame his most zealous servants. 'Tis a condensed tragedy, this scene. A naked and a wounded soul is all that we may expect to carry from the service of falsehood.

II. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL IN THE AWAKENED CONSCIENCE. 1. *Fear fell on all.* Falsehood bows before the majesty of truth. The devils give witness to Jesus. His Name is glorified by the triumph of his servants and the subjection of his foes. Silence was broken, guilty reserve vanished. Probably both converted and unconverted had sin to confess. Fear is in the soul what the earthquake and the tempest are in the physical world. It breaks up the hard crust of habit, lets the pent-up lava-floods break forth, brings purification and health in its train. 2. *Confession is*

*freely made.* We have no right to force the secrets of the heart. Happy is it when they are volunteered, and when the soul brought to itself thus of its own accord "gives glory to God." 3. *Practical results.* We need not debate the question of the "confessional." More important is it to recognize that genuine confession is followed by a renouncement of the sin. Here those who had seen the error of their superstition promptly undid it. They brought their books and burned them in public. It seems a pity that we should thus have lost valuable information. They might have renounced the teaching of the books and spared the books themselves. The records of human aberration are equally useful to us with the records of sound philosophy. Experiments that have failed will not readily be tried again. But in the fervour of a first love all is excusable. Where great corruption has prevailed, there will be presently a reaction, and extreme Puritanism will set in. Where pleasure has run to licence legitimate pleasure will presently be looked upon with suspicion. The example of the Ephesians is not to be followed literally, but in spirit. Evil, like good, is everywhere present. Burn bad books, they will be read the more. Denounce "spiritualism," etc., and people's curiosity will be inflamed about it. Sophistry is hydra-headed: directly we seem to make little way against it. The best counsel is—Let alone what you know is injurious to you. Let the understanding be strengthened and the affections purified, and superstition will fall from the mind as an eruption disappears from the skin when the body is restored to health. "Thus mightily grew the Word of God." Live for the truth; sow it, plant it out in all minds, and let there be no room for the ill weeds to grow.—J.

Vers. 21—41.—*The spirit of rebellion against the gospel.* The tumult at Ephesus presents a picture of certain aspects of human nature and of the contest between good and evil in the world.

I. ITS CAUSES. Most radical of all was the instinct of *self-seeking*. This is the dark background out of which all manner of fiendish shapes arise to contend against the light. Then it was *self-seeking under the guise of religious zeal*. Demetrius is the type of all those who make great professions of interest for the "truth," the "honour of God," the "cause of religion," and the like, while their real motive is personal profit, honour, or notoriety. They appear to be aiming at the highest, are really driving at the lowest object. At the same time, consistency with self gives an appearance of truth, no matter how corrupt and base the self may be. Hence selfish men often earn a credit and reputation refused to the more conscientious. For the egoist always "knows his own mind," though it be a bad mind; the conscientious man has frequent self-doubts and conflicts, the signs of which cannot be suppressed.

II. ITS MEANS AND INSTRUMENTS. The imagination of the multitude must, as usual, be acted upon. For good or for evil, great movements among the masses are due immediately to influences upon the imagination. The preacher's power lies here, and also that of the sophist and the demagogue. The ideas connected with profit and those connected with religion have immense governing power over the mass. We remember the commotion a few years ago among the match-makers in the east of London when it was threatened to tax their industry. So with bread-riots, land-riots, and the like. All the instincts of self-preservation rise against those who appear to menace the very means of existence. Religious ideas are only a degree less powerful. Society rests upon religion. We can only faintly imagine how the Athenian felt about his guardian goddess Athene, or the Ephesian about great Artemis. The Greek city was to each native as one large house or home, the very hearth of which was the altar of the god, the very foundations of which rested on reverence for that god. Here, then, were two of the mightiest instincts of human nature roused up and armed against the gospel—the self-seeking and the religious or superstitious instinct.

III. THE VICTORY OF THE TRUTH. 1. The kingdom of sense and of nature is represented by the great gods of Greece. Christianity is the kingdom of the spirit. The worship of the Greek cities was that of the beautiful; art and science were supreme. Christianity makes the moral ideal supreme. 2. The true temple is the spirit of man. And no worthy temple can be built to God unless his Spirit purify the heart, and his strength be perfected in weakness. Without the internal cultus of the heart, the external, in buildings and ritual, is vain. 3. The spiritual kingdom alone



is abiding. Ephesus and its temple have long been in ruins; but against the Church of Christ the gates of hell cannot prevail. 4. The security of the faithful amidst the storm. They are concealed in a safe place till the hour of danger be overpast (vers. 30, 31). Help is raised up in unexpected quarters (ver. 35, *et seq.*). The storms of angry passions are subdued (ver. 40). The ark of the Church is guided safely through the tempest. 5. Character brought to light in troublous scenes. The chancellor at Ephesus is an example of undaunted courage, of calm prudence, of impartial justice, and of human kindness.—J.

**Vers. 1—7.—Practical exemplification of Christian doctrine.** The principles involved in the case of Apollos might be lost sight of for lack of examples. He himself was so distinguished. The Church needed to be taught by a more prominent and wider illustration. The distinctions insisted on by Paul essential to Christianity. Hence the whole episode of the appearance of Apollos on the scene ordered providentially. Paul's journey through Upper Asia to Ephesus possibly hastened by his desire to watch over the spiritual work there. The gift of the Holy Ghost not a mere endowment, but a seal upon the faith as faith in Christ and his spiritual kingdom; it betokened an entire change of position and of life. The twelve disciples, probably converts of Apollos, were still occupying a Judaistic position, believing in Jesus, but only as John preached him. Their public baptism into the Name of the Lord Jesus was a public renunciation of their old standing as Jews and their acceptance of the higher platform of the spiritual kingdom. The gifts poured out on them and exercised by them was a glorious testimony to Christ in Ephesus. Learn—

I. THE SUPREMACY OF THE GOSPEL. 1. To Judaism. 2. To reformed Judaism with the new hopes revived in it by John. 3. To mere moral change and reformation of life.

II. THE PRACTICAL POWER OF A TRUE FAITH. Those that believed as Paul would have them believe became, not only spiritual men, but preachers. The faith which evangelizes is not a cold assent to truth, not a mere principle of religious reverence and order regulating the individual life, not a mere setting of Christ on the throne of the intellect as the highest Teacher, but a faith which works by love through the energy of the Spirit bestowed. They believe, and therefore speak. The test of true faith is its aggressive tendency. That which sits at home is paralyzed.—R.

**Vers. 8—20 (or ver. 20).—Triumphs of the gospel at Ephesus.** Asiatic character of the superstitions prevalent. Dark, degraded, mysterious. Amulets and charms. Magical words. Exorcism. Not merely among the lower classes, but throughout the city. A dead man said to have spoken from the funeral pile. A wrestler with magic scroll round his body always victorious. Magic an elaborate, abstruse, difficult science, contained in learned books, studied for many years. Notice, therefore—

I. THE PECULIAR GRACIOUSNESS of the miracles wrought at Ephesus, as speaking so loudly against the prevalent superstitions. 1. As showing forth a *greater power* than was dreamed of amongst men. 2. As connecting the working of signs with *the messages of mercy*. Paul disclaimed all power of his own, and simply invited faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. As *rebuking and dishonouring* the falsehoods and presumptions of those who were enslaving the people. 4. As revealing the benevolence and philanthropy of the gospel in distinction from the selfish and sordid practices of those who used sorcery for their own profit.

II. THE MARVELLOUS SPIRITUAL POWER PUT FORTH. The whole neighbourhood ringing with the fame of the miracles and with the story of the gospel. 1. The special difficulty of effecting a change in such men. Their interests involved. Their pride wounded. Their ignorance and self-deception binding them fast. 2. The vastness of the change wrought. The burning of the books, their very means of livelihood. The value great—two thousand pounds sterling. The publicity of the act made it irrevocable. 3. The widespread influence of such a testimony, more than words, more than personal confession. It would preach the gospel to all Asia. 4. The beneficent effect on the future of the people in delivering them from the entanglement of magical superstitions, and so leaving them open to the preaching of the gospel. "Fear fell upon them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (cf. the similar event at Florence under the preaching of Savonarola).—R.

Vers. 21, 22.—*The purpose of a great heart.* I. An example of INTENSE DEVOTEDNESS. 1. Care of the Churches. Bad news from Corinth. Apostolic supervision required. Help for the poor saints at Jerusalem. 2. Love of souls. The message must be preached everywhere, even at Rome. 3. Self-sacrifice. The labours at Ephesus great. The weakness of the apostle a constant temptation to lessen his toil. The prospect both at Jerusalem and at Rome one of dark suffering, persecution, and probable death.

II. THE PURPOSE OF GOD BLENDING WITH THE PURPOSE OF MAN. 1. No self-assertion, but simply absorbing desire to be employed for God. 2. Although the course of events unforeseen, yet the issue worked out gave the apostle "the desire of his heart." 3. The separation from Ephesus, which might have been painful and injurious to the Church there, prepared for by the occurrences in the city. It was necessary that Paul should go for his own personal safety. The disciples willingly parted with him.—R.

Vers. 23-41.—*A popular riot.* A glimpse into the darkness of the heathen world. Passions pent up let loose. The deep foundation of heathen superstition in the selfish, immoral practices of those who ministered to it. The widespreading effects of true religion in revolutionizing the habits and customs. Society must be reformed by the action of spiritual principles from within, not by merely external changes. Ignorance is the mother of disorder. The conflicts of the world are the result of the antagonism of good and evil. All wars proceed from religious roots. The true and abiding peace is the fruit of no other tree than that which God has planted. Notice—

I. ALL FALSE RELIGION RESORTS TO VIOLENCE TO PROTECT ITSELF. Idolatry was afraid of the truth. The corrupt Church has condemned itself by the use of such methods. All departure from the peaceful spirit of Christ has wrought evil results.

II. ALL BUSINESS WHICH PROFITS BY THE IGNORANCE, SUPERSTITION, AND EVIL PASSIONS OF MEN IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY. The immoral traffic by which men satisfy their greed of wealth cannot be too strenuously denounced. True religion remodels society in all respects. The working men should be taught that Christianity is their best friend; not any form of it, but the pure gospel.

III. EVEN IN THE HEATHEN WORLD GOD HAD WITNESSES TO HIMSELF. In *Roman law* and discipline; in *common sense*; in that *natural religion*, which doubtless prompted the more cultivated men of the time to doubt the extravagances of idolatry; in the *moral instincts* of conscience, which could appreciate the law-abiding and peaceful efforts of the new teachers and protect them from mob violence.

IV. Comparing this scene and its revelations with the Epistle to the Ephesians, we learn how the TRUTHS OF CHRIST WERE ADAPTED TO LIFT UP MIND, HEART, AND LIFE in the heathen world, substituting a better worship, a purer theology, a more stable society, a grander future, for all that then held mankind in bondage. "Silver shrines to Artemis" being abolished, the handicraft of men is turned to build up the earthly state, that it may bless those who live in it and the God to whose Name it is consecrated.

V. Face to face with the disorderly violence of the ignorant and misguided, the rule of all Christian enterprise is to withdraw as much as possible from contention; not to meet violence with violence, but to trust implicitly to THE ABSOLUTE SUPERIORITY OF MORAL OVER PHYSICAL FORCE. "Force is no remedy." Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd. Religion should regulate politics and social life by indirect means. As far as opportunity permits, the regulation of earthly matters should be left in the hands of the secular powers. Let the town-clerk dismiss the assembly. Let not Paul mix himself up in the strife. "Cast not your pearls before swine." Jesus did not strive, nor cry, nor make his voice heard in the streets.—R.

Vers. 2-7.—*Baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and its sequel.* The exceeding economy of Scripture will prevent our supposing that these verses lie on the page of Scripture for no end, and will equally prevent our supposing they are present for no distinct and important end. Starting from quite the opposite creed, we are led to notice—

I. THAT THE STRESS OF THE PASSAGE BELONGS, NOT TO THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM, BUT TO THE SUBJECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The point of departure of Paul is from the question, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" His first inquiry is *not* respecting the baptism of those whom he was addressing.

II. THAT THE DISPENSATION OF CHRISTIANITY IS TO BE EMPHATICALLY APPRAISED AS THE DISPENSATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Too little stress is ever laid upon this grand fact. Too much stress cannot possibly be laid upon it. And whatever the causes of the former of these things, it may be said that the apostle, from the very first, did what in him lay to provide against a defect so disastrous in its certain tendency and work.

III. THAT BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, WHATEVER REFERENCE IT MAY OBVIOUSLY AND FOR OBVIOUS REASONS CARRY TO HIM, IS EQUIVALENT TO THE SIGN OF ADMISSION TO ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF THE SPIRIT, AND TO IMPLICIT SUBMISSION ON THE PART OF THOSE OF THOSE MATURE YEARS TO THE FULL RULE OF THE SPIRIT.

IV. THAT TO INVEST THIS FACT WITH THE GREATEST POSSIBLE PLAINNESS AND EMPHASIS, EVEN THE SPECIAL GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN APOSTOLIC TIMES WERE BESTOWED AS THE SEQUEL OF BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.—B.

Vers. 9, 10.—*The shelter awhile of young converts.* We must be conscious, in reading this passage, of something approaching a new point of departure on the part of Paul. He was not the man hitherto to shrink from either the malice of the synagogue or the uproar of the market-hall. But there were reasons why, with so long a stay at Ephesus, the company of the disciples should be “separated,” and some foreshadowing be now given, under the continued supervision of Paul, of what should come to be the form of an individual Christian Church. And we have here the nucleus of this. We are reminded of the Church of Christ, as existing in any individual place, that it should be answerable to find—

I. A HOME OF SOME SAFETY FOR DISCIPLES. Such a home should be able to show: 1. Shelter from the “hardened” world; the world that does not believe, and resolutely will not believe; the world that, being thus disposed as to itself, is also manifestly disposed to disturb the belief and peace of those who do believe, seeking to enter in to ravage “the flock” (ch. xx. 29). This it was abundantly easy to do in the synagogue by every kind of dishonest quibble and disputatious debate. It should not be by any means so possible within the fold of the Church. 2. Teaching of the truth. The truth should be certain of being obtained here, and the teacher should be *competent*. He will teach, not by force of authority, but by persuasion of the truth. He will be listened to and esteemed because he shall prove his word, and prove it to be a word of power. 3. Sympathizing companionship. It is needed (1) for prayer and the exercises of religion; (2) for daily social life; (3) for the stimulating of religious purpose and work.

II. AN OPEN DOOR OF ENTRANCE AND A WELCOME FOR THE WORLD. 1. Nothing more dishonours the *place* of the Church of Christ, or disowns all that is most characteristic of his Spirit, than *exclusiveness*. 2. The door of entrance is to be large enough to admit not only the honest seekers, not only those who already show the signs of penitence, not only those by nature humble and meek, but all who will enter—the worst, the most unpromising. These cannot, indeed, enter into *the Church itself* of Christ; but even to them welcome may be given to the *place* of the Church, that “happily they may be born” again therein. If, indeed, they enter and stay to show themselves the disturbers of disciples and the resolutely “hardened,” we have here our authority how to proceed. But otherwise let them be free to enter within the walls of Zion. Let them there hear the Word and, if needs be, debate it. Let them be free to hear the prayers and join the songs of disciples; for “much people” for Christ may be amongst them. This is at least one of the ways by which the world is to be gained for Christ. It does not, indeed, exempt the Church from missionary and “aggressive” work—work which probably, in the more settled ecclesiastical state of our own country, has been lamentably overlooked. But it appears that it was the method by which, during “the space of two years, all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” When the world’s turbulent streams dash by that river, full and deep and peaceful, of the city of God, the very contrast will arrest attention and arouse reflection in not a few.—B.

Vers. 11, 12.—“*Special miracles.*” Under ordinary circumstances this description of the miracles wrought by God by the hands of Paul might be liable to the supposition of being mere surplusage of words, a miracle in itself being a thing sufficiently “*special.*” The supposition, however, cannot attach to the description as found here, just *because* it



is here that it is found. And when we look a moment beneath the surface we discover ample justification for the epithet applied to these miracles. Let us observe—

I. IN WHAT THE SPECIALTY OF THESE MIRACLES CONSISTS. We are taught the answer in one verse. 1. They are wrought without the laying on of the hands of Paul, without his presence, without his voice, without (so far as appears) even any knowledge on his part of the persons or the needs of the persons who received healing. These four circumstances do incontestably entitle them to the description of "*special*;" the nearest approach to them being miracles of the kind that were wrought when one touched "the hem of the garment" of Jesus. But Jesus did then perceive and know that "virtue was gone out of him." 2. They are wrought with intervening signs of most unusual kind; the connecting visible links being handkerchiefs and aprons that have been in some contact with the body of the apostle, and are now carried to the sick and possessed by any one—presumably any one of their friends. The nearest approach to anything so "*special*" as this may, perhaps, be considered to occur in the conduct of those who brought their sick on their couches into the streets, that haply the mere "shadow of Peter might overshadow some of them" (ch. v. 15). But in these cases there was far nearer and closer connection between the miracles wrought (if such were wrought) and Peter than the connection of handkerchiefs fitfully carried by any one.

II. THE OBJECTS OF THIS SPECIALTY OF MIRACLE. 1. To arrest a lively attention. 2. To suggest really far deeper thoughtfulness in all those who had thought to think. 3. To spread far and wide blessings themselves, each one of which had a hundred tongues to speak the praise of some one. 4. To attract attention to the miracle itself and the blessing wrapt in it and to the *real Worker* of it, rather than to suffer attention to be distracted by an apparently too close relation of the miracle to Paul personally. It is true that many in their blindness might still think and speak of all the wonderfulness of Paul, and even of the body of Paul. But yet others would be helped to see (what *with time* all the world would be sure to see) that it was no more due to Paul than to the handkerchief, that the miracle was wrought, but all due to God, and all to his praise and glory.

III. THE MORE GENERAL AND PERMANENT LESSONS OF THIS SPECIALTY OF MIRACLE. For the "*special miracle*" helps to reveal only the more definitely and distinctly the meaning of any miracle. 1. It is for the attainment of a great *moral* end; to give sufficient and just ground, for instance, to believe, to trust, and to act the things which, without it, might be only believed and trusted by credulity, or not at all. 2. It is to attain this moral end, without overriding the exercise of men's own reason and heart and conscience. The just *suggestions* of a miracle, forcible as they ought to prove, are still only moral helps and guides. 3. The miracle is so far forth for darker days and for the more backward stages of humanity. The foundation work for much to be built upon as time should travel on; the *time fittest* for the miracle is the earlier time, the more childish time of the world. Then the besetting *snare of the miracle* would, at all events, count for less harm, and the moral good of it would be enshrined a "*possession for ever*." 4. The miracle is useless if permanent. Evidently the day of miracle was drawing near its end when Peter's shadow was waited for. But very near indeed to its end was it when even Scripture says, "God wrought *special* miracles by the hands of Paul." If their end had not been now near, one of two things must have followed. Either they must have taken their place as grateful resources for the healing of the diseased and the dispossessing of the possessed, or, in order to keep their moral virtue and effect, they must have been becoming in long vista yet more and more "*special*."—B.

Vers. 13—17.—*The prompt exposure and punishment of human iniquity by an evil spirit.* Of the character of these exorcists there can be no doubt. Their deceiving and iniquitous profession was one for gain, and gain only was in their hearts. With less hesitation even than Simon Magus (ch. viii. 18, 19), they propose to themselves to take their chance at least in using and abusing the "*glorious and fearful Name*." And they suffer for their blasphemous and profane attempt. Notice—

I. THE PRESUMPTION INVOLVED. 1. They dare to try the use of the name of Jesus without *any* authority. No doubt Paul was cognizant of the aprons and handkerchiefs taken from his body, and willingly authorized the proceeding. Nothing analogous, how-

ever, finds place now with the exorcists. 2. They use that Name to supersede and as an experimental substitute for the name, or odious deceptive practices, whatever they were, which they had been accustomed to use. 3. They do this for no high-minded ambitious (even if erroneous) adventure, but doubtless for the adventure of money gain alone. 4. Those who do it are Jews, and they are sons of one who was "chief of the priests," and they conspire, seven in number, to do it.

II. THE EXPOSURE. 1. It is the exposure, not of Paul (as in the case of Simon Magus it was of Peter), nor of the horror of true disciples, nor of Heaven's intervention by lightning or thunderbolt. 2. A more humiliating exposure is reserved for these. Even the evil spirit cannot bear the presumptuous and intolerably conceived iniquity. And in the keen satire of truth, which perhaps none know better to accentuate than evil spirits, this ill spirit resents the puny challenge and scathes the hollow deception by a question following upon an honest enough confession, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" 3. The mournfully afflicted man himself joins to make patent the exposure. No doubt already by the usurped organs of his speech it was that the ill spirit had uttered forth his trenchant rebuff, but now the record gives us to understand that the man himself (from whatever source he gained his inspiration) joined hand and limb, and suited the action to the word. The exposure surely needed no more to make it complete.

III. THE PUNISHMENT. 1. *It was summary.* Naked and wounded, the seven fled out of that house. 2. *It was retributive.* The man on whom they had experimented, and perhaps not now for the first time, had doubtless (like he of the tombs) often been "naked and wounded;" but now it is they who are in this plight. 3. *It was essentially humiliating.* "Seven flee before one" (Deut. xxviii. 7, 25), and him the despised or pitied one of long time! 4. *It was humiliating in its circumstances.* For it was not only patent at the time, but it became notorious. "It was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus." So sometimes even now iniquity reaches its height, the cup is filled to the full, the bold daring face that sin sets to heaven is overwhelmed with confusion, and the hour of judgment is arrived.

IV. THE EFFECTS. Whatever may be said too often, too inconsiderately in modern days, to the disparagement of faith in miracles and faith in prayer, and among other things faith in providence and the veritable nearness of the Divine hand, "strong to save" or "swift to smite," there is no doubt that these things were all heartily believed in by the early Church. They were also believed in by many who were not "disciples." Nor is this evidence travelling down from those who were on the spot in the alleged age and place of miracles unimportant. In the present history, just as true as anything else recorded, must this be held, when we read that the great effect was that "fear fell on them all, and that the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." If we are open to learn, we may receive help in the firm persuasion that there was such a thing as the possession by alien and evil spirits of the organs of the human body; that there was such a thing as miracle, special Divine interposition to the suspension of the ordinary course of things; and, dread suggestion! that by whomsoever else, evil spirits are not to be overmastered by, but rather overmaster, evil men.—B.

Vers. 18—20.—*Practical evidence of genuine repentance.* The evidence which "many of them that believed" now came and gave, of the vitality of their faith and the reality of their repentance, was conclusive. And the very thought of it is refreshing as we read it. Here follow four grand evidences of a genuine "faith in Jesus" and "repentance from dead works."

I. TO COME VOLUNTARILY AND CONFESS.

II. TO DISCLOSE, AND TO DISCLOSE VOLUNTARILY, UNDER NO PRESSURE OF TORTURE OR INDUCEMENT OF FEAR OR BRIBE.

III. TO REPUDIATE FORMER WAYS, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE THE WAYS OF LIFE'S LENGTH, OF GETTING A LIVELIHOOD

IV. TO PUBLICLY RENOUNCE THE VERY INSTRUMENTS BY WHICH THE FORMER LIFE AND PROFESSION WERE SUSTAINED. This renunciation was particularly satisfactory in the present instances, inasmuch as it was: 1. Public. 2. A renunciation of large value of capital. 3. A determined putting away from the eyes the things that had often fed temptation. 4. And an effort to put the old evil course, as far as might be

possible, out of memory itself. To this hardest thing of all God would give his gracious and effectual help, for its very endeavour's sake.—B.

**Vers. 23—41.—A typical exhibition of human nature.** This section of the history marks itself off—an episode which gave apostles and disciples, albeit in a very modified time, to rest, and made them spectators of an ample display of certain aspects of human nature. The world, ever ready to arm against the truth, and especially against Christ, the first distinct and bright embodiment of truth, is left sometimes to fight out its own battles. And the amount of smoke in which they end is sometimes, as in the present case, something wonderful. Notice—

**I. THE ADMITTED ROOT OF GRIEVANCE WITH THE WORLDLY MAN.** The illustration which Demetrius here affords of what is often deepest down in the heart of the world—love of money gain, faith in money gain, the illusion that money gain is the one thing needful, and by which alone men live—seems for a moment pleasantly relieved by his apparent free admission of it. Any sense of relief, however, arising from this consideration is speedily largely discounted: 1. By the fact that the ready admission of it but speaks the deeper root of the malady, and that it is a fact grown to be viewed as venial, perhaps natural, nay, very probably necessary, and therefore true to right nature. 2. By the fact that the admission, though apparently free enough, was, when it occurred, only of a semi-public character. Demetrius owns and unfolds the state of his own mind, not to the wide world, but to his own “craftsmen,” whose sympathies would lie very near his own—and he knew it.

**II. THE UNDERTAKING TO ENLIST A VASTLY WIDER CIRCUMFERENCE OF FEELING, BY MIXING THE PERSONAL OR AT MOST CLASS GRIEVANCE UP WITH THE RELIGIOUS SENSE OF “ALL ASIA AND THE WORLD.”** The opportunity was no doubt a tempting one. And though too evident to allow of its inferring any great talent on the part of Demetrius, yet he skilfully avails himself of it. Some persons will miss very tempting opportunities, which are as evident as they may be tempting. “The children of this world are,” however, “wiser in their generation,” as a rule, “than the children of light;” and this was one instance of it. It took most successfully. 1. It is the speedy outcry of “the whole city.” And the movement spread so rapidly from the craftsmen class interest, that when the whole city is “come together” (ver. 32), “the more part knew not wherefore.” It made little difference. They had their throats and their limbs with them, and a couple of victims, “Gaius and Aristarchus” (ver. 29), travelling “companions of Paul.” 2. Most combustible fuel was forthcoming to add to the fire, in the person of a Jew (ver. 34), who was probably unpopular with his own people. He was thrust into prominence by his own people (ver. 33), either that he might be their scapegoat and bear the brunt, or possibly because he was judged to be the most competent man. Of this view there is some evidence in his ready preparedness to address the surging multitude and to “make his defence.” Anyway, for two hours more did the conflagration burn more fiercely for that one move. And it was a move which derived its force from “the burning religious question.” 3. The success of the scheme of Demetrius is illustrated most significantly in what it elicited from the lips of the “town-clerk” (vers. 37, 38), especially in his huge fallacy of asserting to acclamation (which no doubt rang again in that theatre, but to the flat denial of truth and time succeeding and now “of all the world”), “Seeing that these things cannot be spoken against.”

**III. THE COLLAPSE.** However uninformed in religion the town-clerk was, it is plain that he was a competent man. 1. He defends Gaius and Aristarchus, and presumably Paul. He finds and pronounces it boldly that “these men” have done nothing amiss. They are neither sacrilegious “robbers” nor “blasphemers” albeit of an idol! 2. He reduces the swelling hazards of Demetrius to their proper proportions. It is a mere matter of himself and his friends. And it is a mere matter of whether he can prove anything that will entitle him to redress. If he can, he must go to the right place to do it, and take the right course. Probably Demetrius, having set the fire going, had some time ago dropped into the background. But if not, if he and his party had stayed to keep up to the full the excitement, they must inevitably have felt now very small. It were not to have been wondered at if the multitude had turned upon them, with the threat of lynch law. 3. He apprises the whole city that disaster may be the sequel of a whole day's wasted uproar and undefended concourse. And the people seemed open to his



wisdom, and wiser by far than Demetrius at all events. So ends in smoke the work of wickedness, the worldliness of the worldly, the self-seeking and avarice of the man who has far keener foresight for gain and money than any care, past, present, or to come, for truth and religion. The day has been uproar; the human nature of that day has been mere confusion: unseen presences have, however, been in the scene, and still voices at last prevail, which pronounce condemnation on the evil-doing ringleader, which reduce him to shame and humiliation in the eyes of those whose passion he had needlessly excited, and most remarkable of all, which demand and obtain silence. It is no dim augury of the close of the world's day, when time shall be ripe.—B.

**Ver. 2.—Progression in Divine revelations.** “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” This is evidently the simple answer of men who knew nothing whatever about the matter concerning which they were asked. They were sincerely religious men; they are called “disciples,” and yet—though the thing seems almost incredible to us—they had heard nothing about the Holy Ghost. Much is explained by a careful observation of the facts connected with the early preaching of the gospel at Ephesus. Give some account of the attractive eloquence, but limited knowledge, of Apollos. It was an advance upon Judaism to accept John the Baptist as a prophet, but it seems that Apollos knew only of John's demand of repentance, and had not heard of his direct witness to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Apollos could only teach as much as he knew, and when St. Paul reached Ephesus, he was troubled to find the condition of the disciples. “He noticed a lack of spiritual gifts; perhaps, also, a want of the peace and joy and brightness that showed itself in others. They presented the features of a rigorous asceticism, like that of the *Therapeutæ* (of Alexandria)—the outward signs of repentance and mortification, but something was manifestly lacking for their spiritual completeness.” In his anxiety to find out what was wrong, the apostle asked this searching question, “Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?” They did not; they knew nothing about the Holy Ghost. So St. Paul lifts them on stage after stage. First to the apprehension of Christ, the Messiah and Saviour, to whom John gave witness, and then to the experience of the coming and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as the seal of the believer. And in this we are plainly taught that there is a progression in Christian truth—that it is unfolded to us in parts and stages. And we may even cherish the inspiring assurance that “the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his Word.” A sentiment is allowed to prevail that “revelation must always be perfect and complete.” It is always perfect in its fitness to its times and to its purpose, but any particular revelation is only a piece and a part of the truth, and it is *imperfect* when it is treated as separate from the whole of which it is a part. 1. There is historical progression in Divine revelation. Broad principles, covering the general relations of God with men, were given to the early world. Each passing age was helped to fill in some part of the outline. There was a fulness of times for the manifestation of Messiah, and, step by step, truth had advanced to meet the revelation which he brought. 2. There is progression in our apprehension of the Christian truth. No man can grasp it all at once. It comes to us all bit by bit, step by step. Some of the more advanced Christian truths cannot possibly be grasped until certain other and preparatory ones are well learned; and some even of these preparatory truths cannot be really grasped until we have passed through the sanctified experiences of middle life. Take, for instance, the Fatherhood of God. A man must experimentally learn the mystery of the human fatherhood before he can really receive the full revelation of the Divine Fatherhood. As a *son* he may know how he feels towards the Father, but until he is a father he cannot know how the great Father feels towards him. In the matter of our salvation the Divine order of progress seems to be (1) John and repentance; (2) Jesus and faith; (3) the Spirit and holiness.

1. IN THE PROGRESSION OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH, THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY GHOST IS THE HIGHEST REVELATION YET MADE. It comes last. It comes after and through the objective Christ. It is the inward witness to him who lived, laboured, died, and rose, “God manifest in the flesh.” The spiritual operations of God in men's minds and hearts may be traced in Old Testament times. All spiritual life always is by the energy of God's Spirit. And the speciality of the working of the Holy Ghost in the new kingdom is not that he is some new Spirit, but that his agencies of motive,

persuasion, and instruction are all taken from the manifested life of the Son of God. He "takes of the things of Christ, and reveals them unto us." Our Lord said of him, "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

II. THE TRUTH OF THE HOLY GHOST, BEING THE HIGHEST TRUTH, IS THE ONE WHOSE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE IS MOST ESSENTIAL TO HIGH AND HOLY LIVING. We are responsible for attaining the best that can be attained. We are not at the highest when we accept of the truth of Christ *for* us; that is but a low first step of spiritual apprehension. We have but taken a little step up when we apprehend the truth of Christ *with* us. We only gain the wonderful experiences, and reach the highest Christian power, when we know of Christ *in* us. All growth in the Christian life is response to the life of the Spirit in our souls. Growth (1) in knowledge; (2) in graces; (3) and in the mastery of the soul over the body. His presences and his working in us are the spring of all our impulses to whatsoever is good and wise and true.

III. THE TRUTH OF THE SPIRIT, BEING THE HIGHEST TRUTH, IS THE ONE MOST EASILY IMPERILLED. Therefore we should be most jealous of the doctrine and the personal experience of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The Christian sin that is of unspeakable sadness is quenching or grieving the Spirit. The sin that hath never forgiveness is sin against the Holy Ghost. The prayer that utters forth to God a soul's innermost agony is this: "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." The highest truths are always likely to fade first. In the individual experience, and in the Church doctrine, the truth of the Spirit will fade from its place and power long before any dimness seems to pass over the figure of the manifested human Christ. Trees mostly die from the top downward. And the first effect of wearing and weathering is to rub off those delicate touches and tints, which are the highest efforts of the artist, and give the supreme charm to his work.

Impress that we may be, like these Ephesians, behind the revelation that has been made for us, or indifferent to it. Then we may pity them, but we must blame ourselves. And we must humble ourselves, and repent, if, knowing of this gentle, awful, gracious, comforting Holy Ghost, we are found neglecting his Divine inworkings. He is the last and highest revelation of God to men; then let us not "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption."—R. T.

Ver. 9.—*The first Christian congregation.* St. Paul had before this taken a room near the synagogue at Corinth, but it seems that this case at Ephesus represents the first distinct effort to form a Christian congregation, with its own order and officers, as separate from the synagogue. Now St. Paul casts himself free of Judaism; the time had come for separation, and for arranging a distinctly Christian organization. The school of Tyrannus was a public hall for lecturing and discussion. Canon Farrar says, "There must have been many an anxious hour, many a bitter struggle, many an exciting debate, before the Jews finally adopted a tone, not only of decided rejection, but even of so fierce an opposition, that St. Paul was forced once more, as at Corinth, openly to secede from their communion. We do not sufficiently estimate the pain which such circumstances must have caused to him. His life was so beset with trials, that each trial, however heavy in itself, is passed over amid a multitude that were still more grievous. But we must remember that St. Paul, though a Christian, still regarded himself as a true Israelite, and he must have felt, at least as severely as a Luther or a Whitefield, this involuntary alienation from the religious communion of his childhood." We do but suggest three lines of thought; the treatment of them will depend upon the standpoint of the preacher.

I. SEPARATION AS AFFECTING THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH. Several distinct conceptions of Christ's Church on earth are found established among Christian people. Show how the idea of *separation* stands related to each; and how the Church, as a whole, ought to stand to any separated members.

II. SEPARATION AS AFFECTING THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIANS. Show that as fellowship depends on common Christian life and interests, we may reasonably expect it to triumph over differences in modes of worship, places of worship, and even over diversities of opinion.

III. SEPARATION AS AFFECTING THE RELATIONS OF MINISTERS TO SECTIONS. Especially point out the peril of over-estimating the *point of division*, and setting it in

undue prominence in public teaching. A minister may preach sectional opinion rather than the "whole counsel of God."—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*The call for special miracles.* It should be carefully shown that Scripture miracles are never mere wonders, or displays of mere power. They are always *signs*, and always wrought for the sake of some immediate or prospective *moral* benefit. This may be affirmed, however singular the mere form of the miracle may be. The circumstances under which God sees fit to allow his servants to work miracles need careful examination and consideration. In connection with the text we find special circumstances. St. Paul had separated the disciples, and formed a distinct Christian community. For his own sake, and for the satisfaction of the people, it was important that some attestation of the Divine approval should be given. The question had to be settled—Was the Christian community, thus separately constituted, as fully under the power of the Holy Ghost as the older Jewish Christian community had been? The speciality of the miracles is designed to intimate that, under these circumstances, a new and mightier baptism of God's Spirit came upon the apostle, so that, apart from conscious efforts of his own will, healing virtue went forth from him. It is also noticed that "This great effusion of healing power, which, it is implied by the tense of the verb *wrought*, continued for some time, was granted as a counterpoise to the magical and theurgic practices to which the Ephesians were addicted" (vers. 13, 19). In explanation of the agency of "handkerchiefs and aprons," the following notes from Eastern travellers may be helpfully suggestive:—Thomson, in 'The Land and the Book,' says, "The external instruments connected with working miracles had, in ancient times, transferred to them, in imagination, a portion of the sanctity and reverence due to him who used them, or to that Divine power which was transmitted through them. This applied not only to the staves, robes, and mantles of prophets while living, but to such things as their bones also, and even their very gravestones, when dead. It is now common to bind on or wrap round the sick some part of the robes of reputed saints, in the belief that healing virtue will be communicated from it." Morier says, "At a short distance, near the roadside, we saw the burial-place of a Persian saint, enclosed by very rude walls. Close to it grew a small bush, upon the branches of which were tied a variety of rags and remnants of garments. The Persians conceive that these rags, from their vicinity to the saint, acquire peculiar preservative virtues against sickness; and, substituting others, they take bits away, and, tying them about their persons, use them as talismans." How far God was pleased to fit in with the common sentiment of the age, in his gracious condescension, requires consideration; we may observe that such special manifestations of miraculous powers were strictly *temporary*, limited to the particular occasion for which they were required. We view these "special miracles" as the outward sign of three things.

I. GOD'S APPROVAL OF ST. PAUL'S ACTION IN SEPARATING THE DISCIPLES. That action had been intensely trying to the apostle himself; and a very questionable thing to the view of the synagogue folk, and of the disciples who followed the apostle. If miraculous attestations had been withheld just at this juncture, the enemies of St. Paul would have been enabled to assert the Divine disapproval of his conduct, and St. Paul would himself have been disheartened. Compare how graciously *now* God often gives success to his servants when they are called to take special action; giving them converts in unusual numbers, and so silencing their adversaries.

II. GOD'S ATTESTING PRESENCE WITH THE CHURCH'S LIFE AND LABOUR. In those days miracles were the strong affirmation,—"*God is with us.*" The very point of them is that they were wrought in the power of God. The very purpose of them is to bring home to men's hearts the conviction that what the miracle-worker *says* is from God, seeing that, so evidently, what he *does* is from God. Miracles are needed when men are dependent on outward and sensible proofs. Miracles are not needed when men are able to estimate moral and spiritual proofs. And, therefore, miracles are not needed *now*.

III. GOD'S CONDESCENSION IN PERSUADING THE EPHESIANS BY ADAPTING HIS DEALINGS TO THEIR SENTIMENTS. They were inclined to magic, and based their belief on superstitious rites. God would not admit the truth of their "black arts," but he would consider the tone and temper of mind which characterized them, and adapt his dealings



so as to meet their prejudices and persuade them. So teaching us that while we must never misrepresent or prejudice God's truth, we must always seek so to know men that we may adapt our presentations of truth to them, and meet them on their more impressionable sides.—R. T.

**Vers. 18, 19.—*Signs of religious sincerity.*** The incidents narrated in these verses suggest the subject of the demands which men feel that a Christian profession makes upon their practical life and conduct. It appears that these disciples at Ephesus had been converted for some time before they made these sacrifices; but presently the relation of the Christian truth to their magical and superstitious sentiments was fully recognised, and they were impelled to destroy the books which had been associated with their early religious beliefs. "Ephesus was the chief seat of the black art at this time, and the popular mind was familiar with the pretension to supernatural gifts and endowments, and by its experience in sorceries and charms was in a measure hardened against the due effect of miracles." "Magicians and astrologers swarmed in her streets, and there was a brisk trade in the charms, incantations, books of divination, rules for interpreting dreams, and the like, such as have at all times made up the structure of superstition." "By actually destroying the books, they not only acknowledged the sinfulness of the practices taught therein, but also cut off at once and absolutely the possibility of relapse on their own part, or of leaving a temptation or stumbling-block in the way of others." But the books burned were private property, and did not stop the evil work of those who made and sold such books. In one form or in another the question always comes before the new converts—What are you prepared to give up for Christ's sake?

**I. SINCERE AND EARNEST CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ALWAYS, IN GREATER OR LESS DEGREE, ANTAGONISTIC TO THE FORMER LIFE.** A man may take up with religion as a mere matter of profession, and find that such a religion makes little or no demand for change in his general sentiments or conduct. But if a man is truly regenerate, if religion is to him a serious, searching reality, he will soon find out that it is out of harmony with much in his former life, and as he cannot give up the religion he must give up the old habits and indulgences. This applies not only to such evils as intemperance and immorality, but also to more minute forms of questionable indulgence. Earnest Christian life is found to be corrective of even our cherished ideas, our views of truth and duty; and the most moral and amiable man is made so sensitive to purity and truth by a Divine regeneration that he finds something in his former life and thought which is out of harmony with his new feeling. It appears, therefore, that our Lord's principle is much more minutely searching than we imagine it to be: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." The point of this head may be represented in full detail, as it concerns the several classes of a congregation. The principle enunciated will gain force by precise application to the class evils which sincere piety resists.

**II. SINCERE AND EARNEST CHRISTIAN LIFE CAN ONLY BE MAINTAINED BY SETTING LIFE, ACTION, AND RELATIONS IN RIGHT TONE.** A man may feel how opposed his sentiments and his habits are to the Christian profession he makes, and yet he may do nothing towards readjusting their relations. He may try to live his old self-willed life, and at the same time try to keep his faith in Christ and his soul-allegiance to him. But the point on which we now insist is, that he *cannot do this*. He imperils his Christian life in the attempt. He keeps himself open to Satanic temptations. He is in the almost hopeless, and certainly dishonourable, condition of those who, in olden times, "feared the Lord and served other gods." Full consistency between life and profession is absolutely necessary. In any case of conflict between the two, the Spirit of God will help us to a victory. If, even in small matters, we fail to keep the full harmony between piety and conduct, piety loses its tone, and gradually its very life. **Formalism** can allow licence. Piety never can.

**III. EFFORTS TO ADJUST CONDUCT SO AS TO MATCH RELIGION MAY INVOLVE SERIOUS SACRIFICE.** As in the case of these Ephesian Christians. They destroyed books representing a great wealth. They might have *sold* them; but since others might be injured by them, they destroyed them, at great personal sacrifice. Illustration may be taken from certain forms of trade, which Christians feel they can no longer carry on; or from certain pleasures, in which they feel they can no longer indulge. Impress, in

conclusion, the teaching of our Lord about the foolishness of the man who would take up a Christian profession, and does not "sit down first and count the cost."—R. T.

Ver. 20.—*The prevailing power of the Word.* "So mightily grew the Word of the Lord and prevailed." Compare other Scripture figures; e.g. "His Word runneth very swiftly" (Ps. cxlvii. 15). "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified" (2 Thess. iii. 1).

I. THE GROWING POWER OF GOD'S WORD. Reference is to the gospel message—the tidings brought to men concerning Jesus Christ; the message brought by Jesus Christ, the message centering in, and gathering round, Jesus Christ. Put into all kinds of moulds and shapes and forms of language, the "Word of the Lord" is this: The heavenly Father has himself overcome the hindrances and separating difficulties dividing him from his children. He is become a reconciling God, and in Jesus Christ his Son he is willing to pardon; he is waiting to welcome back home every returning, repenting, believing child. The apostle thinks of this gospel message as a "living thing," and so he speaks of its "growing." Wherever there is life there is growth. If there be life in the seed, there will be growth of blade, breaking the soil, and shooting up into the light. If growth ever ceases in our bodies, death ensues. And so, if there be life in God's gospel, it will have the power of widening, spreading, and enlarging its influence. The sign of growth noticed in connection with the text is the power which Christian truth increasingly gained over the feelings and the conduct of the Ephesian disciples, leading them to a most impressive public act of self-denial. Show that the growth takes two forms. (1) Inward growth; the gospel as the soul's new life, gaining an ever-increasing self-mastery. (2) Outward growth; the gospel as a testimony, winning more and more adherents as it is proclaimed more fully and widely. And impress (3) that these two modes of growth are mutually related and mutually helpful. Culture of inward spiritual life always should bear its fruit in enlarged Christian activity; and greater energy put into Christian work should always be felt to make greater demands on Christian life and feeling. Illustrate this twofold growth from the history of the early Church.

II. THE PREVAILING POWER OF THE WORD. This sets before us two points. 1. Since there is life in the Word, and that life is seen in *growth*, it will be sure to meet with opposition. If the apostles would only have ceased to witness for Christ, they would have suffered no persecution. If any of us will let the life in Christ fade down and die within us, the world will cease to present any opposition. The dead in trespasses and sins have no difficulties; but "they that will live godly must suffer persecution." It is a simple condition of growth, that it involves resistance; it pushes its way against opposition. And, in the case of earnest piety, this opposition becomes more than resistance—it is enmity and wilful endeavour. 2. Since there is life in the Word, we may be sure that it will overcome the opposition; or, as the text says, it will "prevail"—gain the mastery. This may be illustrated from martyr-times, when Christianity has seemed to be crushed, but the *life* has proved stronger than all outward resistances. See especially, in recent years, the result of persecutions in Madagascar. Illustrate also from missionary spheres, in which various kinds of hindrances are presented, yet the life in the Word gains gradual mastery. Illustrate by St. Paul's sublime triumphs over all forms of opposition met with in his missionary work. And show how the prevailing power of the Word is found in individual experience; in the gradual mastery of personal habits; and in our external relations and circumstances. Impress that faith in the "growth" and "prevailing power" of Christianity needs to be kept alive in the Church and in all our hearts; and that such a faith would prove an abiding inspiration to holier living and to nobler labouring.—R. T.

Vers. 24—29.—*Self-interest opposing Christianity.* The introduction should concern the temple, statue, and worship of the goddess Diana; the reputation in which this goddess was held; the numbers of persons who visited her shrine; the various opportunities afforded by this fact for making money; and the fears which were created by the act of self-sacrifice in burning the magical books. "The shrines were miniature models of the temple, containing a representation of the statue of the goddess," and they were chiefly made for the visitors to take away as memorials of their visit.

"There was a sacred month at Ephesus—the month of Diana—when a great religious gathering took place to celebrate the public games in honour of the goddess. It was the pleasant month of May. Trade was brisk then at Ephesus, not only from the large temporary increase of population, by the presence of provincials, and strangers from more distant parts, but from the purchases they made in the shops and markets. Among the tradesmen of Ephesus, there were none who depended more upon the business of this month than did makers and dealers in holy trinkets." "In the sacred month of the third year of St. Paul's stay in Ephesus, the makers of the 'silver shrines' found, to their consternation, that the demand for their commodity had so materially fallen off as most seriously to affect their interests. Upon this one of the leading men of their guild convened a meeting of their craft, and, in an inflammatory speech, pointed out Paul as the person who, by his preaching that there were 'no gods made with hands,' had not only produced this crisis in the trade, but had endangered their glorious temple, and imperilled that magnificence which the world admired." Kitto well says, "Here we witness a curious, but not unparalleled, union of the 'great goddess Diana' with the great god *Self*, whose worship still exists, though that of Diana is extinct." This brings out the point which seems to have practical interest for us, which we have suggested in our heading. Self-interest opposes (1) vital religion; (2) earnestness in Christ's services; and (3) the very progress of Christianity. We observe—

**I. CHRISTIANITY IS A LIFE.** It is a Divine inward renewal; it is a new creation; it is an impartation of Divine life; it is not, primarily, an interference with social evils, or any endeavour to set the world's wrong right. St. Paul preached the Christian truth, and bade men seek Christ for themselves, that "they might have life;" but we have no reason whatever for supposing that he attacked the shrine-makers, or even made any peril for himself by arguing against the claims of Diana. The power of Christianity still lies in the change which it works in each individual, the regeneration of the man, his possession of a new life. Christian teachers must deal afterwards with the relations between the Christian life and the family and society; but the Christian preacher comes first and declares that "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his son: he that hath the Son hath life."

**II. CHRISTIANITY IS SURE TO EXERT A SOCIAL INFLUENCE.** It comes to save souls; but the action of the renewed cannot fail to tell on social life, bringing in a new set of sentiments and habits, and steadfastly resisting some of the older ones. Illustrations may be found in connection with slavery. Christianity makes no plea against it, and yet, when men become Christians, they are sure to feel the evil of slavery, and are ready to resist it, as a social custom, even at a great sacrifice. So with war. At Ephesus no word need have been spoken about the superstitious use of charms and amulets; but when the Ephesians accepted Christ as their Saviour, a social sentiment against these superstitions would speedily be raised. The one all-effectual counteractive to social and moral evils is strong, vigorous, noble Christian life; and just this the world so greatly needs to-day.

**III. CHRISTIANITY, IN EXERTING ITS SOCIAL INFLUENCE, IS SURE TO BEAR HEAVILY ON SOME.** It did on the shrine-makers of Ephesus; it has done on slaveholders in England and America; it does on drink-sellers, and on all whose trade is in any form immoral: it does on those who would make personal gain out of the superstitions and fears of the people; it does on those who proclaim sceptical and infidel ideas.

**IV. THE INTENSEST OPPOSITION TO CHRISTIANITY IS AROUSED WHERE SELF-INTEREST IS AFFECTED.** Men may feel more *deeply* when they are touched in their emotions, but they make more immediate and active show of their feelings when they are affected in their self-interests. And, on the ground of such self-interest, combinations of men are easily made to resist a truth or a reform. Show how this finds application in these our own milder times. Spiritual Christianity finds itself affecting men's purely worldly interests nowadays. Many a man wages a great fight with himself ere he lets his piety master his very trade; and wins a willingness to sacrifice golden opportunities of advancement and wealth, rather than lose his soul's eternal life. And there are modern illustrations of the way in which men, whose self-interest is touched, will combine to resist revival and reformation. In so many forms the principle laid down by our Lord finds ever fresh illustration: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."



Remarking on the deceptions which lead men to combine against established order or new truth, Bode names the following:—‘1. One pretends to high aims, and is influenced by the grossest selfishness. 2. One thinks himself free to act, and is the involuntary instrument of crafty seducers. 3. One values himself as enlightened, and commits the most unreasonable acts of folly. 4. One prides himself that he contends for the right, and perpetrates the most unrighteous deeds of violence. 5. One is filled with extravagant expectations, and in the end gains nothing.’—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XX.

**Ver. 1.**—*Having sent for . . . and exhorted for called unto him.* A.V. and T.R.; *took leave of them, and departed for and embraced them, and departed.* A.V. Departed for to go into Macedonia. This was St. Paul’s purpose, as he had written to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 5) from Ephesus. He judged it wise, not only with a view to his own safety and that of his companions, but also for the rest and quiet of the Ephesian Church, to take advantage of the lull in the popular storm, and withdraw into quiet waters before any fresh outbreak occurred. Aquila and Priscilla seem to have left Ephesus about the same time, or soon after, since the Epistle to the Romans found them again at Rome (Rom. xvi. 3, 4); and, if the view mentioned in the note to ch. xix. 40 is true—that in the riot they had saved St. Paul’s life at the risk of their own—there were probably the same prudential motives for their leaving Ephesus as there were in the case of the apostle.

**Ver. 2.**—*Through for over,* A.V. *When he had gone through* (διελθόν); see above, ch. viii. 4, 40; x. 38; xiii. 6; xviii. 23, note, etc.; Luke ix. 6. Those parts; *μέρη*, a word especially used of geographical districts: τὰ μέρη τῆς Γαλιλαίας; τὰ μέρη Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος (Matt. ii. 22; xv. 21; see too ch. ii. 10; xix. 1). Greece (Ἑλλάδα, not Ἀχαΐαν, as ch. xix. 21; xviii. 12, and elsewhere). Macedonia and Achaia are always coupled together (see Tacit., ‘Ann.’ i. 76), as in Rom. xv. 26; 1 Thess. i. 7, 8. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, written from Macedonia, it is always Achaia (2 Cor. i. 1, etc.). In fact, Ἑλλάς is found nowhere else in the New Testament, Achaia being the name of the Roman province. Bengel and others understand Hellas here of the country between Macedonia and the Peloponnesus, especially Attica; which would make it probable that St. Paul revisited Athens. But Meyer, Kuinoel, Alford, ‘Speaker’s Commentary,’ etc., think it is synonymous with Achaia. There must, however, be some reason for this unusual use of Hellas instead of Achaia. None seems so likely as that it was meant to cover wider ground than Achaia would naturally indicate, namely Attica.

**Ver. 3.**—*When he had spent . . . there for*

*there abode,* A.V.; *a plot was laid against him by the Jews for when the Jews laid wait for him,* A.V.; *for for into,* A.V.; *determined for purposed,* A.V. (ἐγένετο γνώμη, R.T.). When he had spent three months. For this use of ποιεῖν, see ch. xv. 33. xviii. 33. See also 2 Cor. xi. 25, where the R.V. varies the rendering, and seems to take ποιεῖν as a verb neuter, as the A.V. does here, the accusative (μῆνας τρεῖς) being taken as that of time how long. And a plot, etc. There is no “and” in the Greek. It is better to take the T.R., and to consider ποιήσας as a *nominative pendens* as ἐπιγνώμης is in ch. xix. 34, according to the reading of Meyer, Alford, etc. A plot was laid against him by the Jews. It appears from this that Apollos had not succeeded in subduing the bigoted hatred of the Corinthian Jews. But probably the desperate measure of a plot against his life (ἐπιβουλῇ, as in ch. ix. 23, 24; ver. 19 of this chapter, and ch. xxiii. 30) is an indication that many of their number had joined the Church; and that the unbelieving remnant, being failed in argument, had recourse to violence. He determined; literally, according to the R.T., *he was of opinion*. But the T.R. has ἐγένετο γνώμη, “his opinion was,” the construction of the sentence being changed. The three months were probably chiefly spent at Corinth, according to the intention expressed in 1 Cor. xvi. 6, though it would seem that he had stayed a longer time in Macedonia than he anticipated. It was during his sojourn at Corinth that the Epistle to the Romans was written.

**Ver. 4.**—*As far as for into,* A.V.; *Berea for Berea,* A.V.; *the son of Pyrrhus* is added in the R.T. and R.V.; *Timothee for Timotheus,* A.V. Accompanied; συνέπειτο, peculiar to Luke in the New Testament, but common in medical writers. As far as Asia. If it were merely said, “there accompanied him,” it might have been thought, with regard to the Macedonians Sopater, Aristarchus, and Secundus, that they had merely gone as far as their respective cities, Berea and Thessalonica; it is therefore added (in most manuscripts, though not in B or the Codex Sinaiticus), “as far as Asia.” It does not necessarily follow that they all went as far as Jerusalem, though we know Trophimus and Aristarchus did. Sopater may probably

be the same as *Sosipater* (Rom. xvi. 21), whom St. Paul calls "his kinsman," though some think "the son of Pyrrhus" was added to distinguish him from him. The Thessalonian *Aristarchus* is doubtless the same as the person named in ch. xix. 29; xxvii. 2; and so one would have thought *Gaius* must be the same as is named with *Aristarchus* in ch. xix. 29, were it not that this *Gaius* is described as of *Derbe*, whereas the *Gaius* of ch. xix. 29 was a *man of Macedonia*. *Gaius* of *Derbe* is here coupled with *Timothy*, who was of the neighbouring city of *Lystra* (ch. xvi. 1), but was too well known to make it needful to specify his nationality. *Secundus* is not mentioned elsewhere. Compare *Tertius* and *Quartus* (Rom. xvi. 22, 23), and the common Roman names, *Quinctus*, *Sextus*, *Septimus*, *Octavius*, *Decimus*. *Tychicus*, of *Asia*, is mentioned in Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 12; Titus iii. 12; by which we learn that he continued to be in constant attendance on St. Paul, and have abundant confirmation of his being "of *Asia*." *Trophimus* is called "an *Ephesian*" (ch. xxi. 29), and is named again as a companion of St. Paul, and presumably "of *Asia*." (2 Tim. iv. 20). It is not improbable that some at least of these followers were chosen by the Churches to carry their alms to Jerusalem (see 2 Cor. viii. 19—23; ix. 12, 13; 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4; Rom. xv. 25—28).

Ver. 5.—*But these had gone for these going, A.V. and T.R.; and were waiting for tarried, A.V.* The narrative is so concise that the exact details are matters of conjecture. There is consequently much difference of opinion about them. Howson, with whom *Farrar* (vol. ii. 274) apparently agrees, thinks that the whole party travelled together by land through *Berea* and *Thessalonica*, to *Philippi*; that the party consisting of *Sopater*, *Aristarchus* and *Secundus*, *Gaius*, *Timothy*, *Tychicus*, and *Trophimus*, went on at once from *Philippi* *via* *Neapolis*, to *Troas*, leaving St. Paul, who was now joined by St. Luke, at *Philippi*, to pass eight or nine days there during the Feast of the *Passover*. And this seems quite consistent with St. Luke's narrative. But *Lewin* (vol. ii. p. 74) thinks that only St. Paul (accompanied, as he supposes, by Luke, Titus, and Jason) went to *Macedonia*, and that the others sailed direct from *Cenchreae* to *Troas*. *Renan*, on the other hand, thinks they all sailed together from *Cenchreae* to *Neapolis*, whence Paul's party went to *Philippi*, and the others to *Troas*. There is no clue to the reason why the party thus separated.

Ver. 6.—*Tarried for abode, A.V. We; distinctly marking that Luke, the author of the narrative, whom we left at Philippi (ch. xvi. 13, 14), joined him again at the same place. Renan* (p. 498) well remarks, "At *Philippi*

Paul once more met the disciple who had guided him for the first time to *Macedonia*. He attached him to his company again, and thus secured as his companion in the voyage the historian who was to write an account of it, with such infinite charm of manner and such perfect truth." It may be noted that this passage is quite conclusive against the notion entertained by some, that *Timothy* was the writer of the Acts. From *Philippi*; i.e. from *Neapolis*, the port of *Philippi*. After the days of unleavened bread, which lasted eight days, including the day of eating the *Passover*. In five days. An unusually long voyage, owing, doubtless, to unfavourable winds. On the former occasion when he sailed from *Troas* to *Neapolis* he was only two days (ch. xvi. 11). Where we tarried seven days. As the last of these seven days was Sunday—"the first day of the week"—he must have arrived on the preceding Monday, and left *Neapolis* on the preceding Thursday. Some, however, reckon the days differently. It must be remembered that the apostle's movements were dependent upon the arrival and departure of the merchant-ships by which he travelled.

Ver. 7.—*We were gathered for the disciples came, A.V. and T.R.; discoursed with for preached unto, A.V.; intending for ready, A.V.; prolonged for continued, A.V.* The first day of the week. This is an important evidence of the keeping of the Lord's day by the Church as a day for their Church assemblies (see Luke xxiv. 1, 30, 35; John xx. 19, 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 2). To break bread. This is also an important example of weekly communion as the practice of the first Christians. Comparing the phrase, "to break bread," with St. Luke's account of the institution of the Holy Eucharist (Luke xxiii. 19) and the passages just quoted in Luke xxiv., and St. Paul's language (1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 24), it is impossible not to conclude that the breaking of bread in the celebration of the Lord's Supper is an essential part of the holy sacrament, which man may not for any specious reasons omit. Further, this passage seems to indicate that evening Communion, after the example of the first Lord's Supper, was at this time the practice of the Church. It was preceded (see ver. 11) by the preaching of the Word. The following description, given by *Justin Martyr*, in his second Apology to *Antoninus Pius* (or *Marcus Aurelius*), of the Church assemblies in his day, not a hundred years after this time, is in exact agreement with it:—"On the day which is called Sunday, all (Christians) who dwell either in town or country come together to one place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read for a certain time, and then the president of the meeting, when the

reader has stopped, makes a discourse, in which he instructs and exhorts the people to the imitation of the good deeds of which they have just heard. We then all rise up together, and address prayers (to God); and, when our prayers are ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president, to the best of his ability, offers up both prayers and thanksgivings, and the people assent, saying 'Amen.' And then the distribution of the bread and wine, over which the thanksgivings have been offered, is made to all present, and all partake of it." He adds that the elements are carried to the absent by the deacons, and that collections are made for poor widows, and orphans, and sick, and prisoners. Discoursed (*διελέγετο*); ch. xvii. 17, note. Prolonged (*παρέτεινε*). The word is found only here in the New Testament, but is of frequent use in medical writers.

Ver. 8.—*We for they, A.V. and T.R.* It is not obvious why St. Luke mentions the many lights. Some say to mark the solemnity of the first day of the week (Kuinoel); some, to remove all possible occasion of scandal as regards such midnight meetings (Bengel); some, to explain how the young man's fall was immediately perceived (Meyer); others, to account for the young man's drowsiness, which would be increased by the many lights, possibly making the room hot (Alford); for ornament (Olshausen). But possibly it is the mere mention by an eye-witness of a fact which struck him. It is obvious that the room must have been lit for a night meeting—only perhaps there were more lights than usual.

Ver. 9.—*The for a, A.V.; borne down with for being fallen into a, A.V.; discoursed yet longer for was long preaching, A.V.; being borne down by his sleep he for he sunk down with sleep, and, A.V.; story for loft, A.V.* In the window; or, on the window-seat. The window was merely the opening in the wall, without any glass or shutter. Borne down; *καταφερόμενος*, the proper word in connection with sleep, either, as here, when sleep is the agent, or, followed by *eis ὕπνον*, falling into sleep. Yet longer; rather, as in the A.V., long; i.e. longer than usual, somewhat or very long.

Ver. 10.—*Make ye no ado for trouble not yourselves, A.V.* Fell on him, and embracing him said; imitating the action of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings xvii. 17—21; 2 Kings iv. 34). Make ye no ado (*μὴ θορυβεῖσθε*). *Θορυβος* and *θορυβεῖσθαι* are words especially used of the lamentations made for the dead. Thus when Jesus came to the house of Jairus, he found the multitude outside the house, *θορυβοῦμενον*, "making a tumult," i.e. wailing and lamenting (Matt. ix. 23).

This is still more clearly brought out in Mark v. 38, 39, "He beholdeth a tumult (*θορυβον*), and many weeping and wailing greatly. And . . . he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult (*θορυβεῖσθε*), and weep? The child is not dead, but sleepeth." In exactly the same way St. Paul here calms the rising sobs and wailings of the people standing round the body of Eutychus, by saying, *Μὴ θορυβεῖσθε*, "Do not wail over him as dead, for his life is in him."

Ver. 11.—*And when he was gone up for when he therefore was come up again, A.V.; the bread for bread, A.V. and T.R.; had talked with them for talked, A.V.* Had broken the bread; i.e. the bread already prepared, and spoken of in ver. 7 (where see note), but which had not yet been broken in consequence of Paul's long discourse. And eaten. *γευσάμενος* does not seem to mean "having eaten of the bread broken," for the word is never used of the sacramental eating of bread. That word is always *φάγειν* (1 Cor. xi. 20, 24) or *ἐσθίειν* (1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28, 29). But *γευσάμενος* seems rather to be taken absolutely, as in ch. x. 10, "having eaten," meaning "having partaken" of the meal, the *agape*, which followed the Eucharist. Talked with them (*ὁμιλήσας*). Of familiar converse (Luke xxiv. 14, 15; ch. xxiv. 26). Compare the use of *ὁμιλία* in 1 Cor. xv. 33; from whence, of course, comes the word "homily."

Ver. 12.—*Lad for young man, A.V.*

Ver. 13.—*But for and, A.V.; going for went, A.V.; the ship for ship, A.V.; set sail for and sailed, A.V.; for for unto, A.V.; intending for minding, A.V.; by land for afoot, A.V.* Assos. A seaport on the coast of Troas, twenty-four Roman miles from Troas. The town was built on a high and precipitous cliff. Luke does not tell us why on this occasion he was separated from Paul. Had he appointed. The passive *διατεταγμένος ἦν* is here used in an active sense, as in Diod. Sic. (quoted by Kuinoel) and other Greek writers (see Steph., 'Thesaur.'). But some consider it as the middle voice (Meyer).

Ver. 14.—*Met for met with, A.V.* Mitylene. The capital of the island of Lesbos, called by Horace "pulchra Mitylene" ('Epist.,' i. xi. 17). The harbour on the north-eastern coast is described by Strabo as "spacious and deep, and sheltered by a breakwater" (xiii. 2).

Ver. 15.—*Sailing from for we sailed, A.V.; we came for and came, A.V.; following for next, A.V.; touched for arrived, A.V.; and the day after for and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day, A.V. and T.R.* Over against Chios. Their course would lie through the narrow strait between Chios on the west and the mainland on the east. Samos. The large island opposite Ephesus. There they touched, or put in (*παρεβάλομεν*). If the clause in the T.R. is genuine, they did



not pass the night at Samos, but "made a short run from thence in the evening to Trogyllum" (Alford), "the rocky extremity of the ridge of Mycale, on the Ionian coast, between which and the southern extremity of Samos the channel is barely a mile wide" ('Speaker's Commentary'). We came to Miletus. Anciently the chief city of Ionia, and a most powerful maritime and commercial place, about twenty-eight miles south of Ephesus; though in the time of Homer it was a Carian city. In St. Paul's time it was situated on the south-west coast of the Latmian gulf, just opposite the mouth of the Meander on the east. But since his time the whole gulf of Latmos has been filled up with soil brought down by the river, so that Miletus is no longer on the seacoast, and the new mouth of the Meander is to the west instead of to the east of Miletus, which lies about eight miles inland (Lewin, vol. ii. p. 90; Smith's 'Dict. of Geog.'). Miletus was the seat of a bishopric in after times. As regards this visit to Miletus, some identify it with that mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 20. And it is certainly remarkable that so many of the same persons in connection with the same places are mentioned in both passages and in the pastoral Epistles generally. The identical persons are Paul, Timothy, Luke, Trophimus, Tychicus, and Apollos (ch. xx. 4, 5, compared with 2 Tim. iv. 11, 12, 20); and the identical places are Corinth, Thessalonica, Troas, Ephesus, Miletus, and Crete. But the other circumstances do not agree well with the events of this journey, but seem to belong to a later period of St. Paul's life (see below, ver. 25, note).

Ver. 16.—*Past for by, A.V.; that he might not have to for because he would not, A.V.; time for the time, A.V.; was hastening for hastened, A.V.* To spend time; *χρονοτριβῆσαι*, found only here in the New Testament, but used by Aristotle and others. It has rather the sense of *wasting* time, spending it needlessly. The day of Pentecost. The time of year is thus very distinctly marked. Paul was at Philippi at the time of the Passover, and hoped to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost.

Ver. 17.—*Called to him for called, A.V.* The R.V. gives the force of the middle voice *μετεκαλέσατο*. The elders of the Church; viz. of Ephesus. These are manifestly the same as are called *ἐπισκόπους* in ver. 28, "overseers," or bishops. The distinctive names and functions of Church officers were not yet fixed; and the apostles themselves, aided by degrees by such as Timothy and Titus, were what we now call bishops, exercising oversight over the elders themselves as well as over the whole flock (see 1 Tim. iii. 1). The diocesan episcopate came in gradually as the apostles died off, and the

necessity for a regular episcopate arose (see ch. vi. 1—6; xiv. 23, etc.).

Ver. 18.—*Ye yourselves for ye, A.V.; set foot in for came into, A.V.; was for have been, A.V.; all the time for at all seasons, A.V.*

Ver. 19.—*Lowliness for humility, A.V.; tears for many tears, A.V. and T.R.; with trials for temptations, A.V.; plots for lying in wait, A.V.* Plots (*ἐπιβουαῖς*); comp. ver. 3, and note. There is no special account of Jewish plots in St. Luke's narrative of St. Paul's sojourn at Ephesus. But from ch. xix. 9, 13, and probably 33, we may gather how hostile the unbelieving Jews were to him.

Ver. 20.—*How that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything for and how I kept back nothing, A.V.; profitable for profitable unto you, A.V.; and teaching for but have shooed you and have taught, A.V.* I shrank not from declaring, etc. The R.V. seems to construe the phrase as if it were *ὡς ὑπεστειλάμην τοῦ μὴ ἀναγγεῖλαι ὑμῖν οὐδὲν τῶν συμφερόντων*, which is a very laboured construction, of which the only advantage is that it gives *exactly* the same sense to *ὑπεστειλάμην* as it has in ver. 27. But it is much simpler to take *οὐδὲν* here as governed by *ὑπεστειλάμην*, and to take the verb in its very common sense of "keeping back," or "dissembling" (see the very similar passages quoted by Kuinoel from Demosthenes, Plato, Socrates, etc., *οὐδὲν ὑποστειλάμενος, μηδὲν ὑποστείλαμενος, κ.τ.λ.*), and to take the *τοῦ μὴ ἀναγγεῖλαι ὑμῖν καὶ διδάξαι* as expressing what would have been the effect of such "keeping back," or "dissembling," the *μὴ* extending to both infinitives (Meyer), "so as not to declare and teach," etc. In ver. 27 the verb *ὑπεστειλάμην* must be taken in the equally common sense of "holding back," or "shrinking," under the influence of fear, or indolence, or what not. The difference of rendering is required by the fact that here you have *οὐδὲν ὑπεστειλάμην*, whereas in ver. 27 you have *οὐκ ὑπεστειλάμην*. In several of the classical passages quoted above, and others in Schleusner, *ὑποστέλλεσθαι* is opposed to *παρῆρσις/εσθαι*, or, *μετὰ παρῆρσις διαλεχθῆναι* (comp. therefore for the sentiment, ch. ii. 29; iv. 13, 29, 31; ix. 27; xiii. 46; xiv. 3; xxviii. 31, etc.; Eph. vi. 19, 20).

Ver. 21.—*To Jews and to Greeks for both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, A.V.* (see ch. xix. 10, 17). Repentance, etc. The two cardinal points of gospel teaching, as they are the two necessary qualities for every Christian man. "Repentance whereby we forsake sin, and faith whereby we steadfastly believe the promises of God." There is no ground for the remarks of Kuinoel and others, that repentance is to be retraced

chiefly to the Gentiles, and *faith* to the Jews (see ch. ii. 38; iii. 19; v. 31, etc.; Mark i. 15, etc.).

Ver. 22.—*Bound in the spirit.* Τῷ πνεύματι may either mean “in my spirit” or “by the Spirit,” i.e. the Holy Ghost. If the former, which is the most probable sense (as τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον follows in the next verse), is taken, the sense will be that St. Paul felt himself constrained to go to Jerusalem. A sense of absolute necessity was upon him, and he did not feel himself a free agent to go anywhere else. If the latter sense be taken, the meaning will be that the Holy Ghost was constraining him to go to Jerusalem.

Ver. 23.—*Testifieth unto me for witnesseth,* A.V. and T.R. The Holy Ghost, speaking by the prophets in the different Church assemblies, as the apostle journeyed from city to city. We have one instance of such prophesying recorded in ch. xxi. 10, 11. The instances to which St. Paul here alluded were not mentioned in Luke’s brief narrative.

Ver. 24.—*I hold not my life of any account, as dear for none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear,* A.V. and T.R.; *may accomplish my course for might finish my course with joy,* A.V. and T.R.; *received for have received,* A.V.; *from for, of,* A.V. I hold not my life, etc. It is inconceivable that St. Paul should have uttered, or St. Luke have reported, such an unintelligible sentence as that of the R.T., when it was perfectly easy to express the meaning clearly. Neither does the mention of his life, in the first instance, tally with that of “bonds and afflictions.” The T.R., which has considerable support, seems to be far preferable. The first clause, Οὐδενὸς λόγον ποιούμεναι, means quite naturally, “I take no account of anything;” I value nothing, neither liberty, nor ease, nor comfort. I am ready to suffer the loss of all things, and I do count them as dung (Phil. iii. 7—9); and then he adds yet further, “Neither do I count my own life as precious, so as to accomplish my course,” etc. This metaphor of running a race is a favourite one with St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 24; Gal. v. 7; Phil. iii. 13, 14; 2 Tim. iv. 7). To testify the gospel of the grace of God. An invaluable epitome of the Christian ministry. The essential feature of the gospel is its declaration of God’s free grace to a guilty world, forgiving sins, and imputing righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. The distinctive work of the ministry is to declare that grace. So St. Paul describes his own ministry, and the record of his ministry in the Acts and in his Epistles exactly agrees with this description.

Ver. 25.—*Went about for have gone,* A.V.; *kingdom for kingdom of God,* A.V. and T.R.

I know that ye all, etc. It is a very perplexing question whether St. Paul in this statement spake with prophetic, and therefore infallible, foreknowledge, or whether he merely expressed the strong present conviction of his own mind, that he should never return to Asia again. The question is an important one, as the authenticity of the pastoral Epistles is in a great measure bound up with it. For, in the apparent failure of all hypotheses to bring the writing of them within the time of St. Luke’s narrative, prior to St. Paul’s journey to Rome, we are driven to the theory which places the writing of them, and the circumstances to which they allude, to a time subsequent to St. Paul’s imprisonment at Rome. But this involves the supposition that St. Paul returned to Ephesus after his release from his Roman imprisonment (1 Tim. i. 3; iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 15, 18; iv. 9—14, 19; Titus i. 5), and consequently that St. Paul’s anticipation, that he was in Asia for the last time, was not realized. The question is well discussed by Alford, in the ‘Prolegomena to the Pastoral Epistles,’ and in Paley’s ‘Horæ Paulinæ,’ ch. xi. But it can hardly be said to be definitively settled (see above, note to ver. 15). Bengel thinks the explanation may be that most of those present were dead or dispersed when Paul returned some years later.

Ver. 26.—*Testify unto you for take you to record,* A.V. The solemnity of this address is dependent upon the speaker’s conviction that he was speaking to his hearers for the last time. Hence the force of the words, “this day” (ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ); “my last opportunity.” I am pure, etc. (comp. Ezek. iii. 17—21; xxxiii. 2, 9; Heb. xiii. 17). Note the peril of hiding or watering God’s truth.

Ver. 27.—*Shrank not from declaring for have not shunned to declare,* A.V. (see ver. 20, note); *the whole for all the,* A.V. Counsel of God. His revealed will and purpose concerning man’s salvation (ch. ii. 23; iv. 28; Eph. i. 11).

Ver. 28.—*Take heed for take heed therefore,* A.V. and T.R.; *in for over,* A.V.; *bishops for overseers,* A.V.; *purchased for hath purchased,* A.V. Take heed, etc.; πορεύεσθε ἑαυτοῖς, peculiar to Luke (ch. v. 53; Luke xii. 1; xvii. 3; xxi. 34). Now follows the weighty charge of this great bishop to the clergy assembled at his visitation. With the true feeling of a chief pastor, he thinks of the whole flock, but deals with them chiefly through the under-shepherds. If he can awaken in these individually a deep concern for the souls committed to their charge, he will have done the best that can be done for the flock at large. The first step to such concern for the flock is that each be thoroughly alive to the worth and

the wants of his own soul. "Take heed unto yourselves." He that is careless about his own salvation will never be careful about the souls of others (comp. 1 Tim. iv. 16). In the which the Holy Ghost, etc. *Ἐν δὲ*, no doubt, does not strictly contain the idea of "over which;" but the idea of authoritative oversight is contained in the word *ἐπίσκοπος*, and therefore the rendering of the A.V., and of Alford's A.V. revised, is substantially correct. Perhaps the exact force of the *ἐν δὲ* is "among which," like *ἐν ἡμῖν* (ch. ii. 29, and elsewhere). The call and appointment to the ministry is the special function of the Holy Ghost (John xx. 22, 23; ch. xii. 2; Ordination Service). To feed; *ποιμαίνειν*, the proper word for "tending" in relation to *τὸ ποίμνιον*, the flock, as *ποιμήν*, the pastor, or shepherd, is for him who so feeds the flock of Christ (see John x. 11, 16; xxi. 17; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. v. 2, 3). St. Peter applies the titles of "Shepherd and Bishop of souls" to the Lord Jesus (1 Pet. ii. 25). St. Paul does not use the metaphor elsewhere, except indirectly, and in a different aspect (1 Cor. ix. 7). The Church of God; margin, *Church of the Lord*. There is, perhaps, no single passage in Scripture which has caused more controversy and evoked more difference of opinion than this. The T.R. has *τοῦ Θεοῦ*, but most uncials have *τοῦ Κυρίου*. Kuinoel asserts that the reading *τοῦ Κυρίου* rests on the authority, besides that of the oldest manuscripts, of the old versions, and of many of the most ancient Fathers, and says that it is undoubtedly the true reading. Meyer, too, thinks that the external evidence for *τοῦ Κυρίου* is decisive, and that the internal evidence from the fact that *ἐκκλησία τοῦ Κυρίου* occurs nowhere else in St. Paul's writings, is decisive also. But on the other hand, both the Codex Vaticanus (B) and the Codex Sinaiticus (κ), the two oldest manuscripts, have *Θεοῦ* (Θυ). The Vulgate, too, and the Syriac have it; and such early Fathers as Ignatius (in his Epistle to the Ephesians) and Tertullian use the phrase, "the blood of God," which seems to have been derived from this passage. And Alford reasons powerfully in favour of *Θεοῦ*, dwelling upon the fact that the phrase *ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ* occurs ten times in St. Paul's writings, that of *ἐκκλησία τοῦ Κυρίου* not once. The chief authorities on each side of the question are: (1) in favour of *τοῦ Κυρίου*, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Bornemann, Lange, Olshausen, Davidson, Meyer, Hackett, as also Grotius, Griesbach (doubtfully), Wetstein, Le Clerc, and others; (2) in favour of *τοῦ Θεοῦ*, Bengel, Mill, Whitby, Wolf, Scholz, Knapp, Alford, Wordsworth, etc., and the R.T. It should be added that the evidence for *τοῦ Θεοῦ* has been much

strengthened by the publication by Tischendorf, in 1863, of the Codex Sinaiticus, and in 1867 of the Codex Vaticanus, from his own collation. The result is that *τοῦ Θεοῦ* seems to be the true reading (see the first of the two collects for the Ember weeks in the Book of Common Prayer). With regard to the difficulty that this reading seems to imply the unscriptural phrase, "the blood of God," and to savour of the Monophysite heresy, it is obvious to reply that there is a wide difference between the phrase as it stands and such a one as the direct "blood of God," which Athanasius and others objected to. The mental insertion of "the Lord" or "Christ," as the subject of the verb "purchased," is very easy, the transition from God the Father to God incarnate being one that might be made almost imperceptibly. Others (including the R.T.) take the reading of several good manuscripts, *διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου*, and understand *τοῦ ἰδίου* to be an ellipse for *τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ*, the phrase used in Rom. viii. 32; and so render it "which he purchased by the blood of his own Son." *Οἱ ἰδιοί*, his own, is used without a substantive in John i. 11. This clause is added to enhance the preciousness of the flock, and the responsibility of those who have the oversight of it.

Ver. 29.—*I know for for I know this*, A.V. and T.R.; *grievous wolves shall for shall grievous wolves*, A.V. After my departing (*ἀφίεν*, not *ἀνέλυσιν*, as 2 Tim. iv. 6). The word, which is only found here in the New Testament, usually means "arrival" in classical Greek, but it also means, as here, "departure." It is not to be taken in the sense of "departure from this life," but refers to that separation, which he thought was for ever, which was about to take place. Grievous wolves; still keeping up the metaphor of the flock. The wolves denote the false teachers, principally Judaizers. See 2 Tim. iii. 1—12, and 13, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." These came from Judæa.

Ver. 30.—*And from among for also of*, A.V.; *the disciples for disciples*, A.V. From among your own selves; as opposed to the strangers from Judæa in the preceding verse. So 2 Tim. iv. 3, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (see, as instances, 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18; iv. 14). Speaking perverse things. So 2 Tim. iv. 4, "They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." To draw away the disciples, etc.; i.e. to induce Christians to leave the communion and doctrine of the Church, and join their heresy. The A.V., "to draw away disciples," is



manifestly wrong; τοὺς μαθητὰς are Christ's disciples. For the general statement, see 2 Tim. iii. 6, "They which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women;" and comp. Rom. xvi. 17, 18, which, according to Renan, was addressed to the Ephesians. For the rise of false teachers in Asia, see 1 Tim. i. 3, 20; iv. 1—7; vi. 20, 21; 2 Tim. i. 15; iii.; iv.; 1 John ii. 26; iv. 1, 3, 5; and through the whole Epistle; Rev. ii. 1—7.

Ver 31.—*Wherefore watch ye for therefore watch, A.V.; remembering for and remember, A.V.; admonish for warn, A.V.* By the space of three years (τρεῖς ἔτη). The word is only found here in the New Testament; but it is used in the LXX. of Isa. xv. 5 and 2 Chron. xxxi. 16, and in classical Greek. We have here one of the few chronological data in the Acts. Three years includes the whole of his sojourn at Ephesus as his head-quarters. There were first the three months during which he preached in the synagogue; then the two years which he spent in preaching in the school of Tyrannus, and which terminated with the incident of burning the books of magic (ch. xix. 8, 10, 19). Then there was an indefinite time described in ch. xix. 22 as "for a while" (αὐτὸς ἐπέσχε χρόνον), during which he was busy making plans, probably writing letters, sending off Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, and perhaps making missionary expeditions in the neighbourhood. This may have occupied three or four months longer, and made up a term of two years and six, seven, or eight months, which would quite justify the term τρεῖς ἔτη. Every one. Each one separately, not merely the whole flock together. A weighty lesson for every one who has the cure of souls (comp. John x. 3). Night and day. The night is mentioned first, in accordance with Hebrew usage (Gen. i. 5, 8, 13, etc.; comp. the word νυχθήμερον in 2 Cor. xi. 25). St. Paul enforces the word "Watch," so appropriate to shepherds who watch over their flocks by night (Luke ii. 8), by his own example of admonishing by night as well as day.

Ver. 32.—*Now for now brethren, A.V. and T.R.; the inheritance for an inheritance, A.V. and T.R.; that for which, A.V.* I commend you to God (παριστῆμαι ὑμᾶς). A most beautiful and significant phrase! The apostle is leaving for ever the flock which he had fed with such devoted care and loved with such a fervent love. He was leaving them with a strong impression of the dangers to which they would be exposed. To whom could he entrust them? to what loving hands could he consign them? He gives them to God, to take watchful custody of them. He brings them to him in the prayer of faith. He commits to him the

precious deposit (παράθητη), to be preserved safe unto the day of Christ. So the Saviour of the world, when dying on the cross, said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46), and then trustingly gave up the ghost (see too ch. xiv. 23). No less beautiful are the words which follow: And to the word of his grace. He was thinking of the grievous wolves, and of their pernicious doctrine; of the deceivers that should arise, and their soul-destroying heresies; and so he turns to the one source of safety "the Word of God's grace in Jesus Christ." If they are kept in that Word of truth, if they nourish their souls with that sincere milk, they will be safe. The gospel which he had preached would be their safety unto the end. It would build them up on the one Foundation which never can be moved; it would preserve them holy to take possession of the inheritance of the saints in light. The inheritance (τὴν κληρονομίαν); comp. Eph. i. 14, 18; v. 5; and i. 11, ἐκληρώθημεν. In ch. xxvi. 18 it is κληρον (as in Col. i. 12), and the ἡγιασμένοι are further defined by the addition of πίστις τῇ εἰς ἐμέ, "by the faith which is in me" (for the use of ἀγιάζεσθαι, comp. Heb. x. 10, 14; 1 Cor. i. 2; vi. 11, etc.).

Ver. 33.—*Coveted for have coveted, A.V. Apparel.* One of the items of an Oriental's treasure for the purpose of gifts (2 Kings v. 5, 22, 23, 26; Gen. xlv. 22; Matt. vi. 19, 20). St. Paul contrasts his own example in not seeking such gifts with the conduct of the false apostles who draw away disciples after them for gain (1 Tim. vi. 5—10; Rom. xvi. 17, 18; comp. 1 Cor. ix.).

Ver. 34.—*Ye for yea ye, A.V. and T.R.; ministered for have ministered, A.V.* These hands (see 1 Cor. iv. 12, written from Ephesus a few months before).

Ver. 35.—*In all things I gave you an example for I have showed you all things, A.V.; help for support, A.V. he himself for he, A.V.* In all things (πάντα, for κατὰ πάντα, i.e. πάντως); altogether, in all respects. Gave you an example. The common use of ὑποδείκνυμι is, as rendered in the A.V., "to show," "to teach," as in ch. ix. 16; Luke vi. 47; and repeatedly in the LXX. But perhaps its force here is equivalent to the phrase in John xiii. 15, ὑπόδειγμα ἔδωκα ὑμῖν, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you," as the R.V. takes it. So labouring; viz. as ye have seen me do. To help the weak. Meyer, following Bengel and others, understands this to mean "the weak in faith," like ἀσθενής in 1 Cor. ix. 22. They say that St. Paul's self-denial in refusing the help he had a right to claim as an apostle, and supporting himself by his labour, was a great argument to convince

the weak in faith of his disinterestedness and of the truth of his gospel, and so he recommends the elders of the Church to follow his example. But the word here is ἀσθενούντων, and ἀσθενεῖν and ἀσθενεῖα rather suggest the idea of bodily weakness (Matt. xxv. 36; x. 8, etc.; Luke v. 15, etc.), and the words of the Lord Jesus which follow suggest almsgiving to the needy. So that it is better to understand the word of the weakly and poor, those unable to work for themselves. Doubtless St. Paul, out of his scanty earnings, found something to give to the sick and needy. The sentiment in our text is thus exactly analogous to the precept in Eph. iv. 28. The very word there used, χερσίν, recalls the αἱ χεῖρες αὐταὶ of ver. 34. To remember the words of the Lord Jesus. This is a solitary instance of a saying of our Lord's, not recorded in the Gospels, being referred to in Scripture. There are many alleged sayings of Christ recorded in apocryphal Gospels or in the writings of Fathers as Papias and others (Routh, 'Reliq. Sac.,' i. 9, 10, 12), some of which may be authentic; but this alone is warranted by Scripture. How it came to St. Paul's knowledge, and that of the Ephesian elders to whom he seems to have taken for granted that it was familiar, it is impossible to say. But it seems likely that, in those very early days, some of the Lord's unwritten words may have floated in the memory of men, and been preserved by word of mouth. Clement (1 Cor. ii.) seems to refer to the saying when he writes

in praise of the former character of the Corinthians, that they were then ἡδίων διδόντες ἢ λαμβάνοντες. But he probably had it from the Acts of the Apostles, as had the author of the 'Apostol. Constitut.' (iv. 3. 1). Similar apophthegms are quoted from heathen writers, as those cited by Kuinoel: Δωρεῖσθαι καὶ διδόναι κρείττον ἢ λαμβάνει (Artemidor., 'Onirocr.,' 4, 3); Μᾶλλον ἐστὶ τοῦ ἐλευθέρου τὸ διδόναι οἷς δεῖ, ἢ λαμβάνειν ὅθεν δεῖ (Arist., 'Nicom.,' 4, 1), "It is more becoming to a free man to give to whom he ought to give, than to receive from whom he ought to receive."

Ver. 38.—*The word which he had spoken for the words which he spake*, A.V.; *behold for see*, A.V.; *brought him on his way for accompanied him*, A.V. Brought him on his way; προέτευπον, as ch. xv. 3; xxi. 5. So too 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11; 2 Cor. i. 16; Titus iii. 13; 3 John 6. But the rendering *accompanied* gives the meaning of the two last passages in the Acts better than that of the R.V. It is impossible to part with this most touching narrative, of such exquisite simplicity and beauty, without a parting word of admiration and thankfulness to God for having preserved to his Church this record of apostolic wisdom and faithfulness on the one hand, and of loving devotion of the clergy to their great chief on the other. As long as the stones of the Church are bound together by such strong mortar, it can defy the attacks of its enemies from without.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—12.**—*"In labours more abundant."* The rapid succession and the unbroken continuance of St. Paul's labours is truly marvellous. Rest or recreation seem to be things unknown to him. The tension of spirit caused by imminent and pressing danger seems not to have produced in him, as it does in most men, the need of breathing-time to recover their usual tone. His one idea of the use of life, and of the various faculties of mind and body with which his life was equipped, was apparently to preach Jesus Christ to those who knew him not, and to confirm and establish those who knew him in the faith of the gospel. His energy never flagged and his courage never quailed. Most men's nerves would have been shaken by the terrible riot at Ephesus, when he had been "pressed out of measure, above strength," and had despaired of life. But no sooner was the uproar ceased than St. Paul started upon a new course of labour and danger. He went back to Philippi, where he had been before "shamefully entreated," stripped, scourged, cast into a dungeon, and made fast in the stocks; to the other cities of Macedonia, from whence he had been forced to escape by night for fear of the violence of the Jews; to Corinth, where he had been dragged before the judgment-seat of Gallio, and where the bigotry of the Jews was ready to commence fresh plots against his life. And wherever he went, heart and mind, tongue and pen, were kept at full stretch in preaching and teaching the things concerning Jesus Christ. Such activity of mind and body is indeed wonderful. We see the same untiring spirit, the same inexhaustible love for souls, in the midnight preaching at Troas. Other men, on the eve of a long journey, would have sought repose. Not so St. Paul. The comfort and stability of the Church at Troas, the growth in grace and knowledge of the disciples there, were his one

consideration. Here was an opportunity of preaching Christ to them, of advancing their spiritual life, of imparting to them more of the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ—an opportunity that might never recur, and so he would make the most of it. Hence the whole night given to prayer and preaching and breaking of bread, to communion with God and fellowship with his saints. Such an example ought to be studied by every minister of the Word of God, with a view to following the apostle as he followed Christ. Indolence, self-indulgence, and indifference to the growth of the Church of God, must surely be put to shame in the presence of such abundance of labour. And every man's faith must be strengthened, and his love for Christ and for souls kindled into a flame, as he catches the warmth of the glowing love of this mighty worker in the kingdom of God.

Vers. 13—38.—*The charge.* The previous section brought before us St. Paul's labours as a missionary and an evangelist. The present section sets him before us as the Christian bishop, delivering his solemn charge to the presbyters of the Church. The qualities brought out in the charge are a transparent integrity of character; a noble ingenuousness, which enables him to speak of himself without a particle of vanity; and a resoluteness of purpose to do what is right, which no persuasion could weaken and no dangers turn aside. And then, besides, there is the most tender care for the Church of God. We see a mind full of anxious thought for the future of the Church which he loved, and loved doubly because he knew that Christ loved it and had died for it. We see a prescience and a wisdom which looked at things as they really were, and not as he wished them to be; which took a true measure of cause and effect; and did all that could be done to provide an antidote to the coming evils which he foresaw. Foreseeing the rise of heresies and false teachers, and the rapid growth of false doctrine, which would make havoc among the flock, he threw the whole vigour of his intellect, and the whole warmth of his affection, into the address by which he hoped to raise up in the clergy before him an effectual barrier against the destruction which he feared. And certainly, if words have any effect; if the eloquent speech of one whose life is still more eloquent than his tongue, can move the hearts and stir the spirits of other men, albeit they be men of inferior mould, to virtue and energy of holy action; if prayer and blessing, bursting forth from the full heart of a chosen vessel of God's grace, have any influence and bear any fruit;—it must be that this eloquent charge, so simple, so forcible, so pathetic, so plainly stamped with the image of Paul's inner man, wrought powerfully upon the minds of the Ephesian presbyters. His words must have brought back the memory of his self-denying and superhuman labours; and many a resolution must have sprung up in their hearts to live for Christ, and to be steadfast unto death in defence of his precious truth. And when they rose up from that parting prayer, with streaming eyes and sobbing voice, surely they must have gone back to the oversight of their flocks with a devotion such as they had never felt before. So great is the influence of burning words, glowing with love and enforced by example, when they proceed from one whose office and whose character alike command reverence and respect. God grant that his Church may ever be "ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—12.—*Human life: lights and shadows.* In these verses we are reminded of—

I. THE SCANTY RECORD OF HUMAN LIFE. We have six verses of this valuable chronicle given to the unimportant incident of the accident which befell Eutychus (vers. 7—12), and only three to Paul's visit to Macedonia and Greece! We do not understand why Luke should thus apportion his space, but the fact that he did so reminds us how often most interesting and instructive scenes, or even precious and influential periods, of our life are left unreported. We should have liked to read a full description, in copious detail, of the apostle's visit to the Churches of Macedonia, and especially of his interview with the Church at Corinth. But we are not gratified. Doubtless some of the most heroic deeds have been wrought in secret, and no tongue has told the story;



doubtless some of the most saintly sufferings have been endured unseen by mortal eye, and no pen has described the scene.

“If singing breath or echoing chord  
To every hidden pang were given,  
What endless melodies were poured,  
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!”

Let it be enough that one eye sees and one heart enters into our struggles and our sorrows, and that “our record is on high.”

II. THE PRICELESSNESS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP. “After the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them” (ver. 1). After the storm was over, it was an intense relief to pour out their agitated hearts in mutual sympathy, congratulation, devotion. We know (2 Cor. ii. 13) that Paul found no rest in his spirit because he found not Titus his brother at Troas, and accordingly went on to Macedonia to seek him, and that he was greatly comforted by finding him there (2 Cor. vii. 6, 7). We read of the friends who “accompanied him into Asia” (ver. 4), and throughout we feel how precious beyond all reckoning was the sympathy and succour which came to the wearied and buffeted apostle from true human hearts. Loyal Christian fellowship is one of those beneficent gifts from God which we should count among our chief treasures, for which we should render heartiest thanksgiving; it is also one of those ways in which we can render invaluable service to faithful men, and thus an appreciated service to Christ, the Lord

III. THE PENALTY OF UNFLINCHING FAITHFULNESS. When Paul was about to return to Syria, he found the enmity of his countrymen ready to waylay him. “The Jews laid wait for him” (ver. 3). He could not but speak as Christ, by his Spirit, taught him; and his preaching became more clear and distinct as to the non-necessity of the Law of Moses; his doctrine became less exclusive, more liberal, *i.e.* increasingly repugnant to the narrow-minded Jews; and the fierceness of their hostility found vent in plots against his life. Whoso will follow Christ in “bearing witness to the truth” must be ready to “take up his cross and follow him” along the path of the persecuted. To be quite true to our convictions, to be fearlessly faithful to the Lord who reveals to us his will, is to bear the penalty of the dislike, the hatred, the intrigues of men.

IV. THE OVERRULING PROVIDENCE OF GOD. His enemies schemed, but God thwarted their schemes; he “turned aside,” and their murderous designs were defeated. Christ had more work for him to do, and the uplifted hand of the enemy must be arrested.

“Though destruction walk around us,  
Though the arrows past us fly,  
Angel-guards from thee surround us,  
We are safe, if thou art nigh.”

V. THE OVERFLOW OF SACRED ZEAL. Paul desired to use his opportunity at Troas, and “on the first day of the week” he preached, “ready to depart on the morrow” (ver. 7). In the “multitude of his thoughts within him,” or conscious that he was soon to leave and feeling that he might never return to them, disregarding the lateness of the hour and the condition of the chamber, he still preached on. He “continued his speech until midnight.” That which would be unwise as a rule is allowable as an exception. If “anger hath a privilege,” much more so has zeal. We admire the man whose fullness of soul makes him oblivious of all attendant circumstances. It is well to have a capacity for devotedness which will sometimes lift us far above the level of ordinary moods, and make us forget everything but our subject and our cause, or rather everything but the truth of God and the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ.—C.

Vers. 17, 20, 27, 31, 33—35.—*Paul at Miletus: the review which gratifies.* It has been truly said that our whole life is divisible into the past and the future. The present is a mere point which separates the two. And there is a certain time which must come, if it have not already arrived, when, instead of finding our satisfaction in looking forward to the earthly good which we are to partake of, we shall seek our comfort and our joy in looking back on the path we have trodden and the results we have achieved. All indeed will it be for those who will then have no future for which to hope, and no past

which they can survey with grateful pleasure. It was well with Paul, for when he had to turn his eye backward on a ministry which had been fulfilled, he could regard it with pure and devout gratification. That we may stand in that enviable position in which he now stood, we must be able to remember—

**I. LOWLY-MINDED CONSECRATION TO THE SERVICE OF GOD.** “From the first day that I came in into Asia . . . I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind” (vers. 18, 19). The man who spends his days in spiritual pride, or godless unconcern, or arrogant infidelity, will, if not in the later years of this life, from the other side of the grave, look back on his earthly course with bitterest shame, with fearful pangs of remorse. He who in old age can survey an entire life yielded, with a deep sense of dependence and obligation, to the living God and the loving Saviour will have a cheering ray to light up his shaded path. Well may youthful lips take up the strain—

“’Twill please us to look back to see  
That our whole lives were thine.”

**II. FIDELITY IN OUR SPECIAL SPHERE.** Paul could feel that, as a minister of Jesus Christ, he had done his work thoroughly, conscientiously, faithfully, as in the eye of Christ himself. “I kept back nothing, . . . I have taught you publicly, and from house to house” (ver. 20); “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (ver. 27); “I ceased not to warn every one . . . with tears” (ver. 31). He had thrown the utmost energy of his soul into his work; he had wrought good “with both hands earnestly.” Whatever our vocation may be, it will be a sorry thing to have to recall to our memory duties hardly and punctiliously discharged, just gone through decently and creditably; still worse to have to remember duty left undone or miserably mismanaged. Pleasant and gratifying, on the other hand, to feel that we went to our work with agile step and eager spirit, went through it with conscientious care, and threw into it our utmost strength. Heartiness and zest to-day mean a harvest of refreshing memories for to-morrow.

**III. ENDURANCE OF TRIAL.** Paul reflected that he had served the Lord “with many tears and temptations [trials]” (ver. 19). These trials unto tears were hard to bear patiently at the hour of endurance, but it was a comfort and satisfaction to his spirit afterwards to think that they had never withdrawn him from his confidence in Christ or from his post of active service. The secure and strong position of manhood is all the more satisfactory for the yoke that was borne in youth; the quietude of age is the more acceptable and enjoyable for the struggle or burden of middle life; the rest and rejoicing of the future will be the sweeter and the keener for the toils and the troubles of this present time. The evils that have been left behind, when taken meekly and acquiesced in nobly, materially enhance the blessedness of the hour of freedom and felicity.

**IV. THE DILIGENCE THAT MEANS HONESTY AND THAT INCLUDES BENEFICENCE.** (Vers. 33—35.) It is not only that (1) we should pay the debts which we have formally and deliberately incurred; but that (2) in a world where we are daily receiving the benefit of the toils and sufferings of past ages and of our contemporaries, we are bound, in all honesty, to do something in return—something by which our fellows and, if possible, the future shall be enriched; (3) where self-support is not positively demanded, it may be wisely rendered, in order (as with Paul) that there may be no reason for injurious suspicion; and (4) we should strive to gain enough that we may spare something for the strengthless and dependent—so labouring that we “may support the weak,” and know the greater blessedness of giving, according to the Word of our Lord (ver. 35; see Eph. iv. 28; Heb. xiii. 16).—C.

**Ver. 21.—Paul at Miletus; the substance of Christian doctrine.** Surely we have here an excellent summary of distinctive Christian doctrine. These two things are the essentials of Christian truth. Without repentance there can be no living faith; without faith there can be no real spiritual life; with both of these, a man is a recognized citizen of the kingdom of God, an inheritor of eternal life. There must be—

**I. THE TURNING OF THE HEART AND LIFE UNTO GOD.** This is what constitutes repentance. Repentance may include, but is not constituted by: 1. Strong feelings of sorrow and shame in view of past sin. It is possible and even common to produce

very pungent and powerful feelings by means of energetic oratory ; but these, if they are not real, profound convictions, will be *temporary*, if not even *momentary* ; they are not the essential thing. Repentance will, at some time, include strong feeling of abhorrence of sin, but it may not commence with vivid and convulsive emotions, and is not to be identified with these. 2. Change of outward behaviour. It is indeed true that, when really penitent, the idolater will abandon his idolatry, the thief his dishonesty, the drunkard his intemperance, the liar his falsehoods, the truculent man his violence, etc. ; but it must be remembered that men sometimes change their habits for other reasons than those of religious conviction. Amendment in outward behaviour, valuable and desirable as it is, does not *constitute* "repentance unto God ;" it has also to be considered that there may be, and often is, the truest repentance where there is no alteration of conduct observable by man. The essence of repentance is the turning of the heart to God, and therefore of the life ; it is that "change of mind" which consists in the soul turning from forgetfulness of God to thoughtfulness about him, from indifference to his claims to earnest consideration of them, from unwillingness to own his sway to a perfect readiness to yield everything to him, from the guilty retention of our powers for ourselves to a cheerful surrender of ourselves and our days to the living God, our Father and our Redeemer. Thence will follow all the compunction for sin and all the change of conduct which the past career of the soul will demand. Of this "Greek and Jew" alike have need : the Greek (the Gentile) has need to change his thought of God, and the Jew his also ; whether from superstition, or from indifference, or from formality, *all* have to come into a different relation to God—that of humble subjection to his will and surrender to his service.

II. THE ACCEPTANCE OF JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOUR. "And faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The faith of which Paul testified to Greek and Jew was, we are sure, a living power. It was not a mere passive assent to a form of sound words. It was more than an intellectual acceptance of certain propositions. It was the cordial, hearty acceptance by the soul of a Divine Saviour and Lord ; it was the soul in all its need welcoming a Redeemer in all his strength to save and bless. It meant that acceptance of Jesus Christ in which the soul, conscious of sin and condemnation, flees to him as to the Rock in which it can hide ; in which the heart, recognizing its rightful Lord, goes to him in glad self-surrender, and yields itself to him that he may (1) guide it in his own paths, (2) use it for his own glory, and (3) conduct it to his own kingdom.—C.

Vers. 22—32.—*Paul at Miletus: the forecast which exalts.* Paul had received intimations "in every city" (ver. 23) that "bonds and afflictions" were in store for him ; he looked forward with absolute certainty to personal suffering of some kind ; but this assurance was so far from daunting or depressing him that his spirit rose on strong and eager wing to the full height of such apostolic opportunity (Matt. v. 10—12). The anticipated future, with its bonds and its sufferings and possibly death itself, raised the soul of the man, exalted him ; and he stands before us in the noblest stature to which even he ever attained. Loftier words never came from human lips than these (vers. 22—24). His spiritual exaltation included—

I. CHEERFUL ANTICIPATION OF PERSONAL SUFFERING. "I go bound in the spirit," etc. He felt as one who already wore the bonds and was happy in the bondage. He was already "the prisoner of the Lord," and was proud thus to esteem himself. So far from casting about to see whether there was any open door of escape, he gladly went forth to meet the trials that were in front.

II. SUBLIME INDIFFERENCE TO BODILY ESTATE. "None of these things move me" (ver. 24). He was not affected by considerations which are everything to most men ; they did not make him wince ; he could be poor or rich, hungry or full, confined or at liberty,—it mattered not to him so long as he was following and serving Christ. And here is the explanation of his nobility ; it sprang from—

III. ABSORPTION IN THE SAVIOUR'S WORK. "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish," etc. (ver. 24). "To testify the gospel of the grace of God"—this was the commanding, all-controlling, all-consuming passion of his soul. It impressed everything else into the service ; it burnt up everything that stood in the way. It was the dominating force under which every other power ranged itself obediently.



**IV. CONFIDING PRAYER.** "I commend you to God," etc. (ver. 32). Leaving these converts and, as he surely believed (ver. 25), to see their face no more, he left them in the hands of God; he trustfully committed them to almighty love, to Divine wisdom, to the "faithful Creator." A blessed thing it is for the departing minister, for the dying parent, to leave his people or his family to the tender care of him who will make good the kindest and fullest of his promises.

**V. EXALTED HOPE** "An inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (ver. 32). Paul continually looked forward to the time when he and his converts should meet in the heavenly kingdom; this helped to sustain him under persecution and disappointment. He turned from the shame which was put upon him by man to the glory which waited to be revealed, and his heart was more than satisfied. This should be the result of our contemplation of the future; it should lead to inward exaltation. It should lead to (1) such devotedness to the work we are doing for our Master that we shall rise above the fear of man, and even welcome the losses we endure for Christ's sake; (2) the devout committing of ourselves and of our charge to the love and faithfulness of him who is unfailingly gracious and true; (3) a sustaining, animating hope, in whose blessed radiance all earthly experiences are lighted up. But in order to this there is presupposed in us what there was in Paul (4) an entire surrender of ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.—C.

**Vers. 28—31.—Paul at Miletus: the prospect which pains.** Paul, pursuing his path of self-sacrificing devotion, going on to he knew not what dangers ahead, looking a violent death in the face, was calm, tranquil, even joyful. But the apostle, looking forward to a distracted and injured Church, torn by false doctrine, laid waste by sinful men, was grieved at heart, and he uses the language of solemn adjuration and entreaty.

**I. HUMAN APPREHENSION.** We often go forward with painful apprehension that some ill is about to befall us; therefore with hesitating step, with trembling heart. 1. It has been that men had an intimation from God that evil was in store for them. This was not uncommon in Old Testament times, when the purpose of God was frequently revealed. It was the case with Paul now; it was revealed to him that dark days were ahead in the experience of the Church at Ephesus. 2. It may be the action of individual insight. By the use of a keen and penetrating judgment, a man can often perceive that events are leading up to a disaster. 3. It may be a simple and sound conclusion from the common heritage of man. It is certain that dark shadows must be across the path we tread, and that we shall be entering them before long.

**II. THE SPECIAL ANXIETY OF THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR.** Paul apprehended: 1. Attack from without: "Grievous wolves entering in . . . not sparing the flock" (ver. 29). 2. Mischief from within: "Of your own selves shall men arise," etc. (ver. 30). This is what the Church of Christ has now to fear: the attacks of infidelity, the invitation to immorality, *from without*; and the subtler and more perilous dangers of spiritual decline, of the decay of faith, of injurious doctrines, of the breath of worldliness, *within*.

**III. THE ATTITUDE OF THE RESPONSIBLE.** (Vers. 28—31.) Paul solemnly charged these elders, as those to whose care was committed the Church of God—that sacred body which the Lord had redeemed by his own blood—to do these three things. 1. To keep diligently their own hearts: "Take heed to yourselves" (see Prov. iv. 23). 2. To watch carefully the spirit and course of their people: "And to all the flock." 3. To sustain the life of the members by providing spiritual nourishment: "Feed the Church of God." If we would do what the Divine Head of the Church demands of us, and if we would follow in the footsteps of the most devoted of his servants (see ver. 31), we must (1) cultivate a deep sense of our responsibility; (2) exercise unremitting vigilance over ourselves and our charge; (3) supply that kind and measure of sacred truth which is fitted to strengthen and to purify those whom we undertake to teach.—C.

**Ver. 35.—Paul at Miletus: the greater blessedness.** We may well be thankful that this one word of the Lord Jesus, unrecorded in the "fourfold biography," has been preserved to us. It may be said to be Divine indeed. It gives the heavenly aspect of human life. It is the exact and perfect contravention of that which is low, worldly,

**evil.** It breathes the air of the upper kingdom. It puts into language the very spirit of Jesus Christ. It is the life of the Saviour in a sentence. *To receive* is quite on a low level. Any one and anything can do that; and the further we go down in the scale, the more we find reciprocity common and supreme. The selfish man, the spoiled child, the ravenous animal,—these are remarkable for receiving. And although it may be said that there are truths which only the educated and inspired mind can receive, that there are inducements which only noble souls can receive, yet the act of receiving is one which is common to lower natures, and is one which ordinarily requires only the humbler, if not indeed the baser, faculties. *To give* is on the higher level; for—

**I. IT IS ESSENTIALLY DIVINE.** God lives to bless his universe. His Name is Love; in other words, that which is his distinguishing characteristic, underlying, interpenetrating, crowning all others, is his disposition to bless, his Divine habit of giving. He then most truly expresses his own nature, reveals his essential spirit, when he is giving light, love, truth, joy, life, unto his children. When we give forth of ourselves to others, we are living the life which is intrinsically Divine.

**II. IT IS CHRIST-LIKE.** He “went about doing good.” He lived to enlighten, to comfort, to bestow, to redeem. It was little indeed that he received; it was simply everything that he gave to mankind.

**III. IT IS ANGELIC.** “Are they not all ministering spirits?”

**IV. IT IS HEROIC.** By living to expend ourselves for others, we take our stand with the best and noblest of our race. As the world grows wiser it has a diminishing regard for those “great” men who signalized their career by splendid surroundings, or by brilliant exploits, or by displays of muscular or intellectual strength; it is learning to reserve its admiration and its honour for those who generously spent their faculties and their possessions on behalf of others. These are our heroes and our heroines now; and they will be so more and more. If we would take our place—though it be a humble one—with the best and worthiest of our kind, we must be giving rather than receiving.

**V. IT IS HUMAN,** in the higher sense of the word. It may be human, *as sin has unmade man*, to be coveting, grasping, enjoying. But it is human, *as God first made man*, and *as Jesus Christ is renewing him*, to think of others, to care for others, to strive and suffer for others, to give freely and self-denyingly to those who are in need.

**VI. IT IS ELEVATING.** To be constantly receiving is to be in danger of becoming selfish, of making our own poor self the central object of regard, of depending on continually fresh supplies for satisfaction; in a word, of moral and spiritual degeneracy. But to be giving—to be spending time, thought, sympathy, strength, money, on behalf of others,—is to be sowing in the soil of our souls the seeds of all that is sweetest and noblest; is to be building up in ourselves a character which our Divine Lord will delight to look upon. To receive is to be superficially and momentarily *happy*; to give is to be inwardly and abidingly *blessed*. It is far more blessed to give than to receive.

**VII. ITS RECOMPENSE IS IN THE ETERNAL FUTURE.** (See Matt. xxv. 31—46.)—C.

**Vers. 1—16.—Scenes by the way.** **I. FUGITIVE SERVICE.** “When they persecute you in one city, flee into another,” had said the Lord. But not as a hireling who sees the wolf coming; rather as a brave warrior who retreats fighting. The brave retreat may reflect more honour than the hopeless prolongation of warfare. We must know when to give way. There is a “wise passiveness” and a “masterly inactivity.” If we can but gain our Christian point, we should suffer no scruple of vanity to stand in our way. And how much good may be done in this fugitive way! The runner drops the seed as he goes. The greatest works have been done for God and the world by sufferers and in the midst of suffering. In the world the faithful apostle has tribulation, but peace in his heart; and it distils from his lips upon his brethren as he goes. Perfect ease is not to be coveted by the true servant of Christ. The pulpit is not an easy-chair. Men are goaded to their best by pain. They are perfected for teaching in the school of suffering. Sympathy and love are deepened by common experiences. Courage is truly learned; they that kill the body are not feared, but only they that injure the soul.

**II. LOVING FELLOWSHIP OF THE SAINTS.** (Vers. 7—16.) **1. Exhibited in the feast of love and the common hearing of the Word.** The one prepares for the other; together

they explain each other and enrich each other. Here is the first trace of the *Sunday* observance in the history of the Church. Christian associations are engrafted upon old customs. 2. *As disturbed by grief, and restored.* Eutychus sleeps during the preaching, and falls down. He was taken up dead, or "for dead," as some expositors would interpret. Paul falls upon him, like Elisha in the case of the Shunammite's son (2 Kings iv. 34), and Elijah with the widow's son at Sarepta (1 Kings xvii. 21); so that by vital warmth he may restore him to life. This striking coincidence of death in the midst of life, of life in the midst of death, must have powerfully reminded the disciples of him who is the Resurrection and the Life, of his promise; and so must have strengthened faith, and drawn the bonds of love closer together. "He that brought him back is here." Not small was the consolation of the brethren as the young man was restored.

III. AN IMPRESSIVE SCENE. 1. *The apostle.* He is on his last mission journey. He "works while it is day;" preaching the Word with power; sealing his testimony with miracle, pursuing with constancy the end set before him. 2. *The sleeper.* A warning against weakness and idleness. "I say unto all, Watch!" "The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." 3. *The unsleeping Divine watchfulness and providence.* "We have a God who helps, and the Lord God who saves from death." 4. *The energy of the apostolic personality.* He goes down in compassionate pity, falls upon Eutychus with earnest prayer, embraces him with urgent love. 5. *The hush of the Divine presence.* "Make no noise!" A lesson here for the chamber of the dead. God is here; his "finger touched him and he slept." Bow before his power and decree; collect the heart from distraction, in recollection of its consolations. "They are not dead, but sleep," may be said of our Christian friends. Amidst such humble and resigned silence angels pass through the house, with errands of ministry.—J.

Vers. 17—38.—*Paul's farewell to the elders of Ephesus.* I. THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE EVANGELICAL PREACHER. (Vers. 17—21.) 1. *The spirit and conduct of the preacher himself;* for this is inseparable from the preaching (vers. 18—20). He had lived with his flock. His life had been devoted to their service. He had entered the sphere of their life as the loving sharer in their joys and sorrows. He had presented to them a pattern of humility. He had borne them on his heart. He had been like a sower going forth weeping, to bear the precious seed. The life of the true pastor is a life of many tears—tears of self-doubt and weakness; tears of compassion and sorrow over others, like those of Jeremiah over Jerusalem's fall, of Jesus over her deeper fall. But this sowing of tears prepares for a harvest of joy. Suggestive was the word of Monica, Augustine's mother, "The child of so many tears cannot be lost." Good is verbal preaching; better the preaching of the life; and, perhaps, most impressive of all, the preaching of suffering and self-sacrifice for the truth. 2. *The matter of his preaching.* *Repentance:* a universal necessity. It includes knowledge of sin; remorse; desire for salvation. Repentance has been described as a ladder of sorrow by which we descend into the depths of the heart. *Faith:* this, on the other hand, the celestial ladder, by which we rise to God and to eternity. It includes the knowledge of a Saviour; joy in the reception of him; and firm confidence in his reconciling, sanctifying, and blessing grace. 3. *The self-devotion of the preacher.* (Vers. 22—35.) He should be cast in the heroic mould—that of the hero of the cross. The voice of the Almighty, "Upward and onward!" sounds in his ears evermore. He must be ready at any moment to say "Good-bye" to dearest friends, and uproot himself from fondest associations. Past battles have only trained his faith and courage for greater struggles. This heroic word—

"Theirs not to make reply;  
Theirs but to do or die"

—was essentially the motto of the apostle. He must fulfil himself—cannot rest till he has striven to the end in the "noble contest," finished the race, attained the goal. In the heat of coming storm and darkness kindles the core of light; the Divine love has given all for him, and for it he will give all in return. Extremes meet in this suffering but triumphant man; bound by the irresistible command of his Lord, yet free in the joyous obedience of love.

II. EXHORTATION AND CONFIRMATION. 1. *Exhortation to faithfulness.* They are



solemnly adjured to this by the recollection of his own faithfulness to them. He is clear from responsibility in their regard; for he has not shunned to declare to them "the whole counsel of God." His ministry has been, not merely general, but particular, individual—to each man's heart and conscience. He has discharged himself of his burden; they must bear their own. To whom much has been given, of them much will be required. The duty of the faithful shepherd comprises two things—the feeding and tendance of the sheep, and the defence of the flock against its foes. The great word is "Watch"—over self, the spirit, teaching, and conversation; over the flock,—its Divine constitution does not exempt it from human weakness; and against the wolves, who would glide in, under false clothing, to ravage and devour. 2. *Solemn commendatory prayer.* "I commend you to God!"—the best conclusion of every sermon, of every period of Christian labour. Prayer is the expression of evangelical love; it throws the arms of care and affection around the flock when one's own time of personal labour is past. It is the expression of lowliness: after all we have done, the issue must be left to God. He alone can turn the feeble service into a means of power, he alone give the increase to human sowing and watering. It is the expression of faith: there need be no fear on the part of the under-shepherd in leaving the flock in the hands of the almighty Shepherd himself. "God and the Word of his grace:" in these lies endless power. God and truth: in times of persecution or of unsettled belief, these forces go on upbuilding, reclaiming, converting, finishing, and fitting souls for eternal glory. We need not be anxious about the "reconstruction of theology;" God is ever reconstructing the new out of the old; and fulfilling himself in many ways. Our constructions break; but in him is the unbroken continuity of life itself. 3. *Farewell reminder.* Of his own example, and of all the lessons condensed into it. He had not been a seeker of personal gain; not of "theirs, but of them" (2 Cor. xii. 14). A mirror for all pastors. Happy for them if they can practically prove their disinterestedness by supporting themselves independently of the "altar" (1 Cor. ix. 13). But this may not always be desirable. At least they can show that they do not "preach to live" so much as "live to preach." To give is more blessed than to receive. God is the eternal Giver, forth-pouring himself in natural and spiritual bounty evermore. And the nearer we come to him, the happier we are. The more we take from God, the more we have to give; and again, the more we give, the more we have. To impart is to obtain release from self, from self-seeking, from the burden of superfluity. It is to reap love and thanks, provided always that in imparting anything we truly impart ourselves. 4. *The parting scene.* It is of mingled joy and sorrow. There is the bitterness of orphanage and desolation of John xvi. 16; but the brightness of the hoped-for reunion. Reproaches of conscience at missed opportunities, but yet the sense that "now is the accepted time and the day of salvation." The pain of disruption; but the consciousness of abiding in Christ, and of the final recovery of all we have loved and lost—in him.—J.

Vers. 1—6.—*Apostolic supervision of Church life.* From Ephesus through Macedonia, to Greece, returning through Macedonia by way of Philippi to Troas.

I. The cautious vigilance of Paul in superintending THE RISING SPIRITUAL LIFE of the infant Churches; a lesson in faithfulness and devotion to the interests of fellow-Christians, as well as in allegiance to Christ. It was not enough that the Churches had the truth. It was endangered by many difficulties and surrounding obstructive influences, both from Jews and heathen.

II. THE SELF-SACRIFICE involved in such journeys, not only in the great toil, but in danger to life.

III. THE INCREASING INFLUENCE of the apostle seen in his gathering so many round him as his fellow-travellers and fellow-labourers, a testimony to the hold which his teaching had upon the Churches, showing that the view of Christianity given in the Pauline Epistles, written about this time, was a fair representation of the current belief of the early Gentile Church. Nor could it have been widely different from that taught by the Jewish leaders; otherwise Paul could not have declared that he taught "the whole counsel of God."—B.

Vers. 7—12.—*A legacy of Divine testimony.* The position of Troas such that any

startling event would spread its influence East and West—to Asia and Europe. Paul leaving the scenes of his labours, never more to be seen in them. Some news of contentions in Corinth might disturb the Churches. Asiatic believers would especially need every support. The occasion very solemn. Eucharistic service. Paul's long discourse, interspersed probably with questions and answers. Many last words to be said. Enemies doubted the nature of Christian meetings. Many lights and open windows disproved the calumnies. Upper chamber, three stories from the ground; not large, and betokening the lowly character of the assembly. "Not many mighty, noble, and rich." Possibly even in Troas some popular opposition made such a place necessary.

I. A great SIGN OF DIVINE POWER accompanying Paul's preaching. Had he not been approved of God, he could not have wrought such a miracle. It spoke: 1. To the world, testifying to the nearness of the kingdom of God; to the merciful and restoring grace of the gospel, which came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. 2. To the Church; stamping Pauline teaching with authority; lifting up the courage and hope of disciples. The same Divine power ever with the Church always to the end.

II. A SOLEMN ASSOCIATION with a great and important occasion. Eutychus could scarcely be without blame. The people would never forget that it was the Lord's Supper, and that those who partake in such a service should watch against human infirmities. The wonderful recovery of the lad seemed to shed a new light on the whole service. What glorious power was set forth in that little society! They were comforted for Eutychus and for themselves and for the whole Church. Jesus is life from the dead.—R.

Vers. 13—16.—*Troas to Miletus.* A glimpse into the activity of Paul's life.

I. His extraordinary ENERGY. Walking probably some twenty miles to Assos to meet the vessel. His independence of character. Although a man of strong affections, he loved to be alone sometimes. His purposes were maturely formed and resolutely carried out.

II. His spiritual life was sustained by FELLOWSHIP WITH BRETHREN. The long voyages made in those days in sailing-vessels of only moderate speed would afford time for conversation with Luke and others, for a narrative of the past labour to be at least laid up in Luke's memory. Possibly prepared under the apostle's direction.

III. The movements of the messenger of Christ were not capricious and arbitrary, but under the SPECIAL GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT. He passed by Ephesus because the Spirit urged him on towards Jerusalem. He was lifted above all thought of self and offered as a sacrifice in spirit. An example of Christ-like devotion.—R.

Vers. 17—38.—*Last words.* The scene at Miletus representative.

I. Of the relations between the apostolic leaders and the Churches. 1. Affectionate. 2. Founded on a common faith in the gospel of the grace of God. 3. Absolutely free from all sordid and worldly entanglements. 4. While recognizing the eminence of the leaders, still not dependent on individual men. Sorrowing separation was not overwhelming despair.

II. Of the character of primitive Christianity as exemplified in the words of the apostle and in the elders of Ephesus. 1. Simplicity of the faith. 2. Confidence in the final victory of the truth as it is in Jesus, notwithstanding the inroads of error. 3. Dependence on the Holy Spirit. 4. Brotherhood; helping the weak and ministering to the needy. The love felt towards the apostle an example of the kind of feeling prevailing at Ephesus and in the early Church, so different from the formal and conventional Church life now seen, which is content with a very superficial recognition of brotherly sympathy. The heroism of Paul a fruit of the Spirit.—R.

Ver. 21.—*The ambassador's message.* "Testifying both to the Jews," etc.

I. THE UNIVERSAL REQUIREMENT. 1. The temptations of Jews and Greeks, by which they were hindered from repenting and believing—formalism; self-righteousness; ritualism; ignorance. Both in the synagogue and in the heathen temple need of such a proclamation. 2. The blessedness of the change which such a message would effect. The Jewish and Gentile characters, though very different, both requiring an entire renovation. Helplessness apart from the gospel. The message worked wonders in

families. Contrast of the new life of the Christian Church with the old life of Judaism and paganism. The same message the substance of all Christian teaching, both in our own populations and in heathen lands.

II. THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF MINISTERIAL SUCCESS. The testimony was clear and undoubted; public and private. Repentance and faith. 1. Apostolic preaching aimed at personal conversion. It was not merely intellectual, or sentimental, or doubtful in doctrine, or perfunctory and cold. 2. The foundation on which the truth was placed was the firm one of the gospel facts. Repentance looked towards God who had spoken in the Old Testament, and faith looked towards Christ whose life, death, resurrection, and ascension Paul testified. Mere change of life is not all, but spiritual renovation through Christ. 3. A clear enunciation from the pulpit must be accompanied by a faithful testimony from house to house. The private ministry is as important as the public. 4. Such a testimony of repentance and faith involves all who listen to it in immeasurable responsibility. Let each one add to his seal by personal repentance and personal faith.—R.

Ver. 24.—*The missionary spirit.* "But none of these things move me," etc.

I. A DIVINE CREATION. "Received of the Lord Jesus." 1. After the pattern of *Christ's own mission*. 2. By the inspiration of the *Divine Spirit*. Not by education or any lower means. Not influenced by worldly motives. 3. In the spirit of a *witness*, simply declaring the gospel; recognizing that "the gospel of the grace of God" is "the power of God" to men's salvation.

II. AN EXAMPLE OF SPIRITUAL HEROISM. 1. Victory over fear and selfish calculation. 2. Endurance in toil. The work of the ministry never finished while there are souls to be saved. 3. Superiority to the influence of lower types of character in the Church of Christ. A true man will not be swayed by opinion. The spiritual hero must reckon with the world's spirit of compromise and the Church's lack of sympathy; he must be sometimes misunderstood and maligned. 4. Lively expectation of the future. Paul constantly animated by the prospect of the whole world the kingdom of Christ. The true missionary must lay hold of the future by faith. The missionary spirit in the Church is very different from mere visionary optimism, or speculative scheming for mankind. It is not like the socialistic spirit which easily becomes revolutionary, or the spirit of religious fanaticism which easily becomes cruel and self-destructive; it is based on distinct promises, and it lifts up the whole nature into the light of God. It is the true enthusiasm of humanity (see Isaac Taylor's 'Lectures on Spiritual Christianity').—R.

Ver. 24.—*"The gospel of the grace of God."* The world requires a gospel. Not theories about religion, not theological dogmas, not philosophical speculation, not dreamy sentimentality, but the glad tidings of a Divine work actually achieved on our behalf.

I. THE GRACE OF GOD IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MESSAGE. Not a new law, seeing that the old Law cannot be fulfilled, but a proclamation of Divine forgiveness and life in One set forth as a Propitiation, whose righteousness is unto all and upon all them that believe.

II. THE WORLD'S NECESSITIES ARE SUPPLIED BY THE GOSPEL. 1. *Individually*. The glad tidings of reconciliation. The creation of a new principle of life in the soul. 2. *Socially*. The kingdom of grace. Tidings for the home; for the state; for the community of nations; for all sorts and conditions of men. All other gospels set up in vain as rivals to this. Preach it in Paul's spirit, and let all who have themselves heard it become evangelists, "pure from the blood of all men."—R.

Ver. 28.—*The true Church.* "The Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Significance of this passage in view of Church history and present controversies.

I. THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHURCH. "Purchased with his own blood." Therefore neither an external organism nor a mere idea, but composed of living souls, whose salvation is secured by the merit of his blood. Not a mixed multitude, united by a formal rite, but, professedly at least, those who are partakers of Christ. The admixture



of the evil with the good is the work of the "enemy" who sows the tares, not of the original formation of the Church.

II. INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF CHURCH LIFE. 1. On those who "feed the Church," helping them to take heed to themselves and their flocks. 2. On the individual members of the Church, in the assurance of Divine grace, in the maintenance of vigilance. 3. On the world, both in "warning" away those who would defile the Church, and in inviting those who would enter in at the open gate into eternal life. The apostle's words regarded as prophetic. The greatest dangers of the Church have always arisen from lowering the conception of what the Church is. In our proneness to error, let us turn "to the Law and to the testimony."—R.

Ver. 35.—*The Divine secret of a blessed life.* "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus," etc. Interest of the saying as not found in our Gospels. The life of Jesus said it. Possibly preserved traditionally. Summary of many recorded sayings. Christ his own interpreter.

I. AN INSIGHT INTO THE NATURE OF TRUE BLESSEDNESS. Not in external things, not in a passive state, either intellectually or morally. As we give out from ourselves, we grow in knowledge and enjoyment. Especially true of the active efforts of Christians for the world. To teach is to be taught. To comfort is to be comforted. To sacrifice self is to be rewarded with inward peace and strength.

II. A HELP TO THE CULTIVATION OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. Remember Christ's care of the poor. The Church an organization for the help of mankind. The poor should see that Christianity is on their side. 2. Remember Christ's zeal for the house of God. The passive state unworthy of God's children. Scanty giving a great discouragement to zealous workers; a great hindrance to the progress of the gospel. 3. Remember the claims of the world. The example of the Lord Jesus in laying down life, not to be remembered only by missionaries, but to teach all his disciples to "count all things but loss for his sake."—R.

Vers. 6—12.—*The seven days' halt at the gateway between Europe and Asia.* This seven days' stay at Troas may be safely presumed to have had points of special interest about it. The seven (ver. 4) who accompanied Paul into Asia were here found awaiting him and Silas and the historian. These ten, beside any others possibly with them, must have been the welcomed visitors of the disciples at Troas. Memory dwelt upon Troas, for it was the place where, in the vision of the night (ch. xvi. 9), Paul had received his call into Europe by the man of Macedonia. And after this visit how many fresh memories would cluster around the place and the people and that seven days' halt! We may, amid the exceeding brevity of record here, be nevertheless reminded—

I. HOW TO THE HARDEST LIFE THE MASTER DOES NOT FORGET TO GIVE SOME NEEDFUL INTERVAL OF REPOSE AND REFRESHMENT. No life is more wearing than that which men live who think for nothing, care for nothing, but making wealth. This life often kills the best of the heart, the best of the mind, and the best of even the bodily constitution. In this sense, men work themselves harder and more mercilessly than ever God works them. God never works us mercilessly. But in the hardest work he gives, he mingles much mercy. Yet his work in a healthy sense is hard, will match any for hardness, nor probably did the hardest-worked slave of self or Satan ever work harder than Paul did. But now, so far as we can see, the seven days at Troas, undisturbed by persecution from without or dissuasion from within, must have been days of happy converse and of peaceful rest. How much this party of ten would have to say to one another, to hear of the people at Troas and to tell to them!

II. HOW THE HOLIEST SERVICE ON EARTH MAY BE EXPOSED TO THE INTERRUPTION OF APPARENT ACCIDENT, ANYWAY TO INTERRUPTION WELCOME TO NO ONE. The cause of the interruption on this occasion probably infers a very minimum of blame to Eutychus. Some one has spoken to this effect—that hours of sleep are rarely broken by devotion, often enough for light causes. But it may be added that hours of sleep are rarely forfeited, indeed, for hours of devotion, but hours of professed devotion are often broken by sleep, or by what in the long run is even more disastrous—by sleepiness. But as we are told more than once that Eutychus was "overpowered" by sleepiness, and that there were even physical reasons separate from his individual self to increase

the tendency, it is not necessary to fix any blame on him. Nor on Paul. Who did not wish him to prolong last words? What a spirit moved him! What a message he had, and how much for years to come, for the souls of not a few, and for the collected disciples there, might depend on his not omitting to say, and to say at leisure, and to say touchingly, the word given him! Yes; we would think nothing of the small hours being reached, and the many lights in the upper chamber fading before the return of the sun, were it the converse of merely human affection that detained us—men and women and families together. The people at Troas had learnt the superior power and “o’ermastering attraction” of Divine affection and Divine discourse.

III. HOW WITH SOVEREIGN EASE CHRIST TRANSMUTES THE MOST INOPPORTUNE CALAMITY INTO MERCY’S CHOICE MEMORIALS. The calamity no doubt seemed inopportune. The disciples had already learned, of their own grateful will, to come together for religious exercises on “the first day of the week,” and to “break bread” together. Paul and probably some of his companions, if not all of them (ver. 13), had desired to stay with the believers for the service of praise and prayer, of exhortation and of the communion, and perhaps had strained a point to stay over that “first day of the week.” And hearts were full that evening. There was *not* any general weariness. And Paul was speaking that same hour what the Spirit gave him to speak. Had he spoken less, it would have been “the Spirit’s course” that he was restraining, not his own vanity, not his own inconsiderateness. The confusion in that natural but solemn assembly, the disturbance to thought, and the pain of mind especially to some,—these were quite enough to unhinge the occasion. The peaceful stream of holy thought and of deep-flowing joy was checked. Yes; but not long. The Master is again present, and “by the hands” of Paul works, all things considered, a “special miracle.” And the service goes on. Thought sinks deeper, faith triumphs more proudly, and in many a glowing heart great was the joy. The meeting gathers impulse from its pause, and, a bright morning dawning upon it, offered a *dim* type of the morning, brightest of the bright, when the calamity of the present life and the broken service of the lower Church, and even the deepest, fullest, purest joy of the now redeemed heart shall give way to a safety which no foe can surprise, a service that shall ask no rest, and a joy that shall be supreme.—B.

Vers. 17—36.—*Mingled fidelity and tenderness: an example for Christian ministers.* Perhaps there is no other place in which we have so much of the nature of personal detail respecting Paul from his own lips. For the most part in his Epistles, there is a singular abstinence on his part from personal references. They seem to abound here. Without doubting their bare justification, we desiderate some other and higher account of them. May not this be found in a twofold consideration?—(1) that Paul has designedly and probably also of Divine design treated Ephesus as the centre from which the light and truth of Christ and the typical order of his Church were to spread throughout a very wide district; and (2) that Paul is divinely directed here to leave a forcible and a touching example to later generations. He examples the extent to which the fidelity and love of apostles, and of all spiritual successors of apostles, *ought* to be on the look out, and the limits within which also they ought to be restrained, in respect of those portions of the Church over which men may have had the leading oversight. The modern Church surely cries out for admonition, in these very senses supplied by this long passage—whether on the part of its members or of its ministers. The most sacred, most responsible love on earth is too often regarded as a relationship that may be lightly entered upon, and is treated as one that may be, not only lightly broken, but when broken perfunctorily forgotten. The study of this passage must help to inspire very different views. From this farewell address of Paul to those whom he had specially invited to meet him, lest it should be the last time, the chief impressions left on us are these.

I. PAUL’S UNMOVED CONFIDENCE IN HIS MISSION. *All* that is spoken personal to himself, and *all* that is spoken personal to the Ephesian elders, is spoken for the honour and glory and prospects of the gospel of Christ. The “ministry . . . of testifying the gospel of the grace of God” is his steadfast supreme thought. It appears in and through all.

II. PAUL’S UNMOVED CONFIDENCE AS TO WHEREIN CONSISTS ITS EXACT OPERATION UPON MEN. If it is his last exposition of the saving message of his “ministry,” it shall

be thus summarized and thus repeated: "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." These two articles constitute the Christian *magna charta*. They clear the past, they give the key for the future and for all its hope and unfolding promise. "Repentance toward God" clears the very sky of human life, and with a glorious sky indeed overvaults the heart itself. While "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" will secure all else that can be wanted till the time comes for faith to turn to sight.

III. PAUL'S ANXIOUS OUTLOOK—THE OUTLOOK OF SPIRITUAL LOVE. He is not the man to feel he has done his work, and may leave all the rest. He feels he *can't* leave all the rest. Care and anxiety for the morrow, not of earthly good and personal gain, possess him, but for the morrow of the spiritual career and the very souls of those he had called and testified to and led by his example at Ephesus. That a people see this and feel this genuinely present in their spiritual teacher and pastor, is an influence of great effect upon them. And there is another way in which it acts to great advantage. As time flows on, and the hour of trial and temptation and darkness may come, men are wonderfully helped when they can recall the voice and look and earnestness of one who "told them of these things *before* they came to pass."

IV. PAUL'S FAITH IN EXAMPLE AND HIS RESPECTFUL REGARD FOR THE "WITNESS" OF THOSE AMONG WHOM HE HAD LABOURED. Pride and priestly superciliousness never give expression to this side of the question. That the priest's eye is on the people is their haughty doctrine, and the so genuinely true other side of the matter, that the people's eyes are on the priest, to which Paul gives here such humble and kindly expression, is pushed into coldest shade by them. Without doubt, we are justified in thus regarding all that Paul here says of himself that might seem to be said in a self-commendatory style; there is in very truth *nothing* of this in his spirit. He does but speak facts, and can say "ye know" (vers. 18, 34) about them. If the elders of Ephesus do not know them, or know them to be *not* as Paul says, he has courted contradiction, not hidden himself away from it. Of what incalculable consequence example ever is! Of what thrilling consequence it is in the career of the Christian minister and pastor! What quiet rebuke it is, free from bitterness of tongue! What choicest stimulus and suggestion it is, full of life and movement as it is! The leading *items* of conduct and example, in which the Ephesian elders had been able to take *witness* of Paul, are interesting to follow. 1. They had witnessed a long stretch of time and variety of state and temper. 2. They had witnessed an humility of mind that bended itself to circumstances, and endured aright what caused tears not idle and jeopardy of life many a time. 3. They had witnessed frankness of relations, plainness of speech, constancy of ministry, in public and in private. 4. They had witnessed a three years' continued impartial "warning of every one night and day with tears." 5. They had *not* witnessed any self-seeking, any desire of "silver, or gold, or apparel." 6. They had, on the contrary, witnessed their chief pastor at manual labour, to supply his own temporal needs and to help his companions. And in reminding the Ephesian elders of these things, Paul has enshrined for all generations one of the sweetest words of Jesus, unrecorded elsewhere. Yes; and whatever might *come* to be, there was no doubt that Paul had, by all these uncontradicted methods, become unspeakably endeared to those whom he now addresses.

V. PAUL'S USE OF APPEAL. Direct practical appeal is evidently one of the recognized gospel *forces*. The preacher is not to forget it (vers. 28, 31).

VI. PAUL'S FINAL RESORT TO PRAYER. The particularity with which even this testimony of Paul to prayer is recorded is worthy of remark, "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." Prayer is the renunciation of self-confidence. Prayer is the authorized summons for higher help. Prayer is the sure signal of the approach of strength to weakness, continuance to uncertainty, and power to prevail in place of the temptation by which men should fall.

VII. LASTLY, PAUL'S MOVING TENDERNESS OF SPIRIT IN ALL. This tenderness and highly moved state of soul is betokened at every turn. If Paul speak of the relations that had subsisted between the Ephesians and himself (vers. 18—20); if he speak of his own future (vers. 22—25) or allude to his own past (vers. 31—35); if he introduce the names of the Lord Jesus (vers. 24, 35), of the Holy Ghost, and the Church (ver. 28), of God (ver. 32);—the touch is of the tenderest, the tone is of the warmest and softest,



the suggestion is sure to be of the most solemn and pathetic in equal proportions. And in every one of these respects it must be maintained that Paul is an example for all Christian teachers and pastors, for all time. Whatever can be obtained by human instrumentality out of the mysterious mass of humanity will be best obtained thus. No force, no authority, no policy, will obtain souls. Nor will care, and love, and tenderness, and foresight, and faithful "warning" keep all that they shall seem to obtain. The "grievous wolves will enter in;" "men out of" that very number who listened and wept, and were both wept and prayed over, "will arise, speaking perverse things," and, drawn away themselves, "they will draw away others after them." "Offences will come!" But it is to be said that when Paul and the successors of Paul have done and said what Paul now did and said, and something in the same manner, the solemn damning "woe," wherever it fall, will *not* fall on one of them. They have saved their souls, and they are "pure from the blood of all men."—B.

Vers. 37, 38.—*Sure springs of affection.* The great regard of the Ephesian elders to Paul was genuinely spoken in their great regret as now manifested. Farewells have a pathos all their own, and share it with nothing else. They legitimately exhibit what has been long years, perhaps, as legitimately concealed. They are often acts of pardon, and ought always to be such. They bring out better qualities than have been seen before or even suspected of existing. And sometimes they are the inauguration of a far higher love than all that had been, when love of the personal presence is superseded by the love of souls. The farewells of an average human life, could their added effect be calculated, would in many instances be found to have constituted some of its most potent and its highest influences. Notice some of the leading causes of the deep affection recorded in this place.

I. THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE EPHESIANS WITH PAUL HAD BEEN ONE IN WHICH THEY HAD RECEIVED THE NEW AND PRICELESS BLESSING OF HOLY TEACHING.

II. THE ACQUAINTANCE HAD BEEN ONE IN THE SURE BACKGROUND OF WHICH HAD BEEN ALWAYS A HOLY LIVING EXAMPLE.

III. THE ACQUAINTANCE HAD BEEN ONE FAR REMOVED FROM ALL NARROWNESS OR LIMITEDNESS OF AIM: IT HAD BEEN STAMPED WITH USEFULNESS. The behaviour of the sabbath and even of the Lord's day is far more easily taught than the behaviour of all life's "common days," and to teach *this* it is abundantly plain Paul did not disdain.

IV. THE ACQUAINTANCE WAS ONE ALL THE MEMORIES OF WHICH WERE MEMORIES OF UNAFFECTED KINDLINESS AND CONDESCENSION. (1 Thess. ii. 7, 8).—B.

Ver. 7.—*The Lord's day sabbath.* This is the first allusion to distinctively Christian meetings as held on the first day of the week, the day which commemorates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The grounds on which it pleased God to separate a regular, and a frequently recurring, portion of time from common worldly labour may be pointed out. Two things especially require notice. 1. Such a recurring period of rest is practically proved to be necessary for man's physical well-being. It is more and more clearly shown, that the recovering and restoring power of nightly sleep is not sufficient, and that the weekly prolonged rest is essential to the continued maintenance of the bodily powers. 2. A man is not chiefly a body. He is a composite being; but he is, in the truest conception of him, a *soul*, having a body for his use. And it is of the first importance that the soul should have its due and adequate opportunities of culture. For the securing of such opportunities, the tension of bodily claims must be at times relieved. The change of the day kept as the sabbath, from the seventh to the first of the week, does not seem to have taken place by any revelation or any distinct apostolic arrangement. It came about in the natural course of events. Probably at first the Jewish Christian disciples kept the Jewish sabbath in the usual way, and also had some special meeting of their own, in remembrance of the Lord's resurrection, on the evening of the first day of the week. As the gospel won its way among the Gentiles, the distinctively Christian meetings would grow in importance; and when St. Paul separated the disciples from the synagogue, Jewish customs and rules ceased to have authority over them. As Judaism faded away, the Christian day of rest took the place of the older sabbath; and the Christian forms of worship superseded the temple and the synagogue ordinances. We dwell on two points.

**I. THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH WAS A RETENTION, IN SPIRIT, OF THE OLDER JEWISH SABBATH.** What was essential in the original institution was the devotement to God of *one day in seven*. No importance attached to its being the first, or fourth, or seventh, as men may arbitrarily reckon the days of the week. The division of time into weeks is not a natural division, dependent on movements of earth or of moon. It is an arrangement made entirely in view of man's physical and spiritual interests. And the change of the precise day teaches us the important lesson that God cares for the *essence of obedience*, for the spirit of service; and while this finds its proper expression in minute and careful observance of his requirements, God is not limited by the mere *formality* of his commands, but graciously leaves the times, seasons, and modes of our obedience to our good will and judgment. Wherever there is the *spirit* of obedience, there need be little fear as to the finding of right modes. All that is essential in the Jewish sabbath holy souls jealously preserve in the Christian Sunday.

**II. THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH IS A PRECISE SANCTIFYING OF ONE DAY IN SEVEN TO THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.** We are to "keep the sabbath day holy;" that is, we are to fill it fully up with thoughts of God and work for God. But to us God has been "manifest in the flesh;" "he was made flesh and dwelt among us." As with us here in our humanity, Jesus was the "Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his person." And so the keeping the Christian Sunday holy is filling it fully up with thoughts of Christ and work for him. And that they might be helped to such remembrances, the early disciples, every Sunday evening, *broke bread* together, this being the appointed means for recalling to their minds their Lord's broken body and shed blood. For our soul's life, the Sunday is a day for communion with Christ. For the world's salvation, Sunday is a day for witnessing of Christ and working for him. We may learn, then, in what lies the very essence of the rightly kept Christian sabbath. It must have two things always in it. 1. Conscious communion with Christ. 2. Active co-operation with him in his sublime purpose to redeem and save the world.—R. T.

**Vers. 9, 10.—Sleepy Eutychus.** Explain precisely what happened. The window was a lattice opening, and, for the sake of air to the crowded room, the lattices were put aside. How crowded the house was is intimated by the presence of some people in this third story. There they would be sure to feel oppressed by the heat of the house. Eutychus may have fallen into the street, but it is more likely that he fell into the hard paved courtyard. For a similar fall, see the account of the death of Ahaziah, King of Israel (2 Kings i. 2, 17). The word that is translated "young man" implies that Eutychus was quite a youth, and not likely to be very directly interested in St. Paul's address. He very probably was a child of the house where the meeting was held. While the narrative does not positively say that Eutychus was killed by the fall, and indeed leaves it possible for us to assume that he was only badly stunned, the simplest reading of it—without prejudice in relation to the miraculous—certainly leaves the impression of a real death and restoration. We bend attention to the conduct of St. Paul in relation to the matter, and inquire why he took the trouble thus to recover the fallen and dead youth. Dismissing, with a brief mention, the interest he would feel in such a calamity affecting the people of the house, and seeking for explanations having a more general application, we notice—

**I. ST. PAUL FELT THAT EUTYCHUS WAS NOT TO BLAME.** If any one was to blame, it was the apostle himself, who had been led on to talk so long and keep the meeting to unreasonable hours for young folk. Long services make too great a demand on the physical strength of young people. They are trying even to the elder Christians, but their awakened spiritual interest will enable them to bear such fatigue of body. It was not wrong for Eutychus to sleep. He was simply overborne by the heat of the place and the lateness of the hour. And still we need to distinguish between failings which come out of human frailties, and sins that come out of human wilfulness. Too often the young are punished for what is merely due to the influence of surrounding circumstances and the undeveloped bodily conditions. The relation of public services to the young needs careful and judicious treatment. 1. Services for them are advisable and necessary. 2. Their share in the general service of the Church is important. 3. Such services may exert a gracious influence apart from the actual mental comprehension

of what is said and done. 4. Such services need not be unduly limited or too easily altered in character for the sake of the young. 5. Such services should take into due account, and deal considerately with, the physical infirmities of the young. It is possible, by securing variety in forms of worship, changing attitudes, and efficient illustration in preaching, to successfully resist the infirmities of the children. If we find our public services uninteresting, we may question whether we are not, like the apostle, ourselves to blame.

II. ST. PAUL FELT THAT THE DEATH OF EUTYCHUS WOULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD. Too easily the company would take up the notion that this was a judgment on inattention, and such an idea must be at once and fully corrected. In such a case as that of Ananias and Sapphira, no apostle would feel impelled to put forth miraculous power; the judgment of God on sin must stand. But the case of Eutychus belonged to what may fairly be called "accidents." A conjunction of circumstances brought it about—heat, sleepiness, the position in which Eutychus sat, the open window, etc.; and this St. Paul may deal with in a way of miracle, just as Elijah and Elisha had done in cases of sudden death from disease (see 1 Kings xvii. 21; 2 Kings iv. 34). It is quite true that Christianity makes great demands on self-control and self-denial. It expects the spirit to master the body; but it makes its demands of the full-grown "man in Christ;" and, only in appropriate measures and degrees, on those who are young in years and young in the faith. The restoration of Eutychus may be regarded as a prominent and interesting illustration of the "sweet reasonableness" of Christianity.—R. T.

Vers. 9—11.—*Earnestness in preaching and hearing.* The subject is suggested by the conversation, or the address, being lengthened out by the mutual affection of St. Paul and his audience. They were unwilling for him to cease; he was unwilling to keep back anything that might be a help and a blessing to them. That night there were just the conditions that made "long preaching" advisable, and prevented its being thought a weariness. The impulse of the preacher is *such an audience*; the joy of the audience is *such a preacher*. Tell of the associations of St. Paul with Troas, and give illustrative instances of his singular power to draw out towards himself the affection of those whom he served for Christ's sake. A feeling of oppression and anxiety at this time rested on the apostle—he felt that his missionary labours were almost done, and this gave a peculiar urgency and tenderness and pathos to his preachings. They had the characteristics of "last utterances" and "farewells."

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR HAVING PERSONAL CONFIDENCE IN, AND GLOWING AFFECTION FOR, OUR TEACHERS. So far as mere truth is concerned, a stranger with competent knowledge can instruct us; but truth, *in its personal relations with us*, can only be taught by those who know us; and our ability to receive such influence depends largely on our love for those who give it. Press the importance of settled ministries, of regular attendance at the same worship, and of coming into such relations with our "pastors and teachers" as may bring on us the power of their personal characters. Apply the principle, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend;" and our pastors should be felt such friends that we can receive both reproof and comfort and instruction from them.

II. THE DEMANDS WHICH TRUST AND AFFECTION MAKE UPON OUR TEACHERS. These people would not let St. Paul go; they kept him talking all night. He was compelled to respond to such love, and to pour forth his best treasures of knowledge and experience for their help. Trust and love still make the highest demands on our teachers, demands sometimes so great that ministers feel overwhelmed with the tremendous responsibility. Nothing draws out the best in a man like trusting him and loving him. Money can never buy a man's best; duty can never compel a man's best; love can always win a man's best, just as a pure love makes a man noble, and a babe's love calls a mother to sublime self-denials. The one condition of receiving the best spiritual blessings from a Christian teacher is that you must trust and love him as his disciples did St. Paul. His relations with his disciples are models, and happy are they who can give a like joy to their teacher and can win like blessings from him.

In conclusion, deal practically with those things which constitute fitting *preparation of hearers* for receiving the best spiritual blessings through their teachers. Such preparations are: 1. *General*, bearing upon good worshipping habits; right relations with Church life; and personal knowledge of, and affection for, the teacher. 2. *Special to*



each particular occasion of intercourse or of worshipping; the value of all services depending directly upon a man's mood of soul, as won by home culture. The profit of a hearer depends first and chiefly upon himself.—R. T.

**Vers. 21, 24.—Paul's testimony.** "Testifying . . . repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." "To testify the gospel of the grace of God." The main lines of the apostle's work are nowhere given more simply or more clearly than in these sentences. Dean Plumptre suggestively says, "These," viz. repentance and faith, "under all varieties of form, formed the substance of the apostle's teaching. It is obvious, however, that out of these might be developed a whole system of theology—why repentance was needed, and what it was, and how it should show itself; what was involved in the statement that Jesus was the Christ, and why men should believe in him, and what works were the proper fruit of faith. All these were questions which had to be answered before even the most elementary truths could be rightly apprehended." St Paul's ministry consisted in this, bearing witness, "especially as a living example of its power (1 Tim. i. 12—16), of the good tidings that God was not a harsh Judge, but a gracious Father, willing all men to be saved (1 Tim. ii. 4), that was the truth to the proclamation of which his life was to be devoted." As the subjects are familiar, only an outline of treatment is necessary. We take the latter expression first, as being the more general one.

**I. GOD'S GRACE UNTO FORGIVENESS.** The gospel is precisely a message concerning God. It is: 1. A corrective message. God is not as men have thought. 2. A revealing message, bringing to light the fact that, by a sublime act of self-sacrifice, he has declared himself to be *love*, and has shown his grace. 3. A practical message, bearing directly on our *sins*, and giving assurance of *forgiveness*.

**II. GOD'S CONDITIONS FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS GRACE UNTO FORGIVENESS.** Without conditions we should set no value on the grace, the gift, or the forgiveness. The conditions are reasonable and necessary. They are: 1. *Repentance*. If we are not troubled about our sin, we shall not care about forgiveness. 2. *Faith*. If we do not open our hearts to God, he cannot work his good work in us. These are gospel *foundations*; but how much we have to build thereon!—R. T.

**Vers. 22—24.—The cheerful acceptance of a hard lot.** Give illustrations showing how severe, trying, and anxious St. Paul's missionary life had been and was likely to be to the end, taking as a basis his own account given in 2 Cor. xi. 23—28. Additional "hardness" came out of St. Paul's peculiarly nervous and sensitive temperament. He felt both joys and sorrows so keenly. With the apostle's life compare that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Both were divided into two parts: (1) a working part, in which God was served by active labours; (2) a suffering part, in which God was served by bearing and enduring afflictions, persecutions, and troubles. By both *doing* and *bearing* God may still be served; and in both ways God tests the faithfulness of his people in our times. St. Paul was taught "how great things he must suffer for Christ's Name's sake;" and in the passage before us we see him learning this lesson, and giving some expression to his feeling in regard to it. The Spirit said in St. Paul that the time was now near when a special testimony for Christ amid scenes of suffering would be required of him; and the apostle received the revelation, not only calmly, but cheerfully, like the older apostles, counting it all joy that he was thought worthy to suffer for his Master's sake.

**I. EXACTLY WHAT HIS LOT WAS TO BE HE DID NOT KNOW.** The Spirit was only pleased to give *general* indications. Complete knowledge of what is about to happen can never be good for man, because (1) it takes away the simplicity and naturalness of his conduct; (2) it prevents the proper exercise of his will upon due consideration of circumstances that arise; (3) it stops the process of moral and spiritual culture; and (4) it takes from him the call to a living, daily trust in God. The feeling that all is settled and known tends to prevent faith from keeping up a daily dependence. We cannot too thankfully rejoice that our future is wholly unknown to us, and that we are cast entirely upon the promise of "grace for the day," and upon the assurance that the "Lord will provide." "I'd rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light." We know nothing. Nay, we know everything if we know our ever-present Guide.

**II. ST. PAUL WAS AS TRULY MOVED TO GO FORWARD TO SUFFERING AS HE HAD BEEN TO GO FORWARD TO WORK.** Recall the previous scene at Troas (ch. xvi.), when the man of Macedonia called the apostle to begin missionary labours in Europe. He had no doubt then that he was following the Divine lead; and he had no more doubt now that he was called to Jerusalem to suffer. We might think that God gave him notice of coming troubles only to warn him and guard him against them; but we must understand that God may in this way test faithfulness. A plain path of duty may be before us, but we may come to know that suffering lies that way; then we are tested whether we will do the duty or shrink back on account of the suffering. The apostle clearly knew his duty, so matters of personal suffering could be no serious concern to him.

**III. HIS LOYALTY AND LOVE TO CHRIST MADE HIM WILLING TO SERVE HIM IN WHATSOEVER WAY HE WILLED.** Service to Christ, under the inspiration of his love, was St. Paul's simple and sublime idea. "To him to live was Christ." The place, or time, or way of service it was for his Master to settle; and what had to be borne in rendering the service he was willing to let his Master wholly arrange. He set before himself this aim, that he "might finish his course with joy." "It is required of stewards that they be found faithful." Apply to some of the *suffering lots* now given to God's people. They are spheres of service for Christ, and they lose all their "hardness" when they can be thus regarded.

**IV. HIS CHEERFUL OBEDIENCE MADE TRIUMPH OVER HIS AFFLICTIONS AN EASY THING.** So much depends on the spirit in which our lot in life is taken up. The apostle is a beautiful example of cheerfulness and hopefulness. He will not let circumstances crush him, or opposition and adversity overwhelm him. He will not lose heart or hope. He sings in his own soul the song with which he has cheered thousands of the saints through the long Christian ages. "All things work together for good to them that love God." So the trials cannot hurt him. He is more than conqueror. He even finds how to look upon a "hard lot" as an opportunity for rendering fuller and heartier witness for the Lord whom he serves.—R. T.

**Ver. 27.—God's whole counsel.** St. Paul is stating a fact which (1) was to the honour of the Ephesian elders, for they must have been receptive and willing hearers if the apostle found that he might even teach them the *mysteries* of the gospel; and which (2) was to the honour of St. Paul as a teacher, who was so skilful in dividing the Word of truth that he could make the very mysteries plain. Compare his language in Eph. iii. 4, where he speaks of their being "able to understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ." It is right to declare the whole counsel of God; but it is wise only to declare it to those who are prepared to receive it. Compare St. Peter's counsel and reference to St. Paul in 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. The "whole counsel of God" may be regarded as including—

**I. THE COMPLETE CIRCLE OF REVEALED TRUTH.** This embraces (1) the Divine revelations made in different ages; (2) in different forms; (3) to different individuals. While the complete circle may be regarded as contained in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, we may not absolutely limit Divine revelation to the written Word. The Spirit of God has full and free access to the minds and hearts of men, and can reveal his will directly to them if it shall please him so to do. To this circle there is a centre, but the repetition of this cannot be the Divine idea of "preaching the gospel." Every truth within the circle must be held by, and filled with the spirit of, the central truth. Everything within the circle is the gospel. Ministers may not, and they need not, shun to declare to men the very "mysteries" of revelation, since by the consideration of such the higher culture of the soul is gained. Infants take the *milk* of first principles; strong men need to feed upon *strong meat* of difficult and advanced truth.

**II. THE TRUTH IN ITS ANTAGONISTIC PHASES.** This side of the truth may not be left untouched by any teacher, but its treatment calls for much care and wisdom. There are times when we are required to show how truth opposes error; but usually it is far better to preach the positive truth, and let it by its own force gradually root out and destroy error. Three points may here be illustrated. 1. Christ's truth seemed opposed to Judaism. It was not really opposed to the system as given by God to Moses. It was the natural and necessary outgrowth and completion of it. It was

opposed to the corrupt Judaism of the rabbis—a formal and ceremonial system out of which all spiritual life had gone. 2. Christ's truth was opposed to paganism, both in its theories, principles, and practices. 3. Christ's truth is made to appear opposed to science, but only by the undue assumptions and prejudiced bias of some who really misrepresent science. 4. Christ's truth is always opposed to worldly maxims, because it demands the whole soul for *God*, while the world wants the whole soul for *self*.

III. THE TRUTH IN ITS PRACTICAL PHASES. Illustrate from the Epistles how directly it bears: 1. On individual habits; teaching us how to possess the vessels of our bodies in sanctification and honour. 2. On family relations; culturing good fatherhood and motherhood, and requiring honourable obedience from children, and service from dependents. 3. On social fellowships; binding man to man in a gracious brotherhood of common helpfulness.

IV. THE TRUTH WITH THE PERSONAL STAMP ON IT. When uttered with the force of a man's own experience, persuasion, and conviction, the truth gains a new power; but we must also recognize that it comes under limitations by getting apprehension and expression only through limited minds—limited by capacity and limited by education. Individuality is on one side power, but on the other side weakness.

Conclude by fully unfolding what now may be thought of as included in the "whole counsel of God," especially pointing out that, while the field of revelation is the same that St Paul had, the field of speculation has marvellously grown and enlarged. But still, what men have to preach to their fellow-men is not *their speculation*, but *God's revelation*.—R. T.

Ver. 28.—*Blood purchased*. This figure of speech is directly connected with a reference to the Church as a *flock*; to the officers as *overseers*, or *shepherds*; and to their duty as *feeding the flock*. It is important to inquire how far the shepherd and sheep figure will explain the scriptural allusions to redemption, or salvation *by blood*. The figure as used by our Lord in John x. should be compared with the expression in our text, "which he hath purchased with his own blood." The question which we have to consider is—How does a shepherd purchase his sheep with his blood? The answer takes two possible forms.

I. THE SHEPHERD PUTS HIS LIFE IN PERIL IN DEFENDING HIS SHEEP. This is the characteristic feature of the good shepherd as opposed to the *hireling*. The good shepherd purchases their safety every day by his willingness to shed his blood in their defence. So a mother may be said to purchase the health of a sick child by her willingness to give her life for his, imperilling her own life by her anxious watching and care.

II. THE SHEPHERD MAY ACTUALLY GIVE HIS LIFE IN FIGHTING AND KILLING THE WOLVES. If he kills the wolves he saves the sheep, though he may himself die of his wounds; and then he plainly purchases the safety of the flock with his blood.

These figures may be applied to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He imperilled his life for our defence. He met our great foe in conflict. He overcame sin and death, and plucked death's sting away. He died indeed in the struggle, but he set us free; and so he has purchased us by his own blood. He has won, by his great act of self-sacrifice, our love and life for ever. Compare the figure as employed by St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 18, 19).—R. T.

Ver. 35.—*The blessedness of giving*. We have no other record of these words as uttered by Christ. They must have been treasured in the memory of the apostles, and have been often mentioned by them, but never written down. There must be a great deal of Christ's teaching not preserved for us; but we may be assured that the unrecorded was like the recorded, and we may gratefully receive what the Divine Spirit has been pleased to preserve for us. The truth of this statement, that it is "more blessed to give than to receive," is affirmed and illustrated by: 1. St. Paul's own life. 2. Christ's teaching. 3. Christ's own life of giving. 4. All human experience. One of the best things said by the late George Peabody is this, spoken at a *réunion* at his native town: "It is sometimes hard for one who has devoted the best part of his life to the accumulation of money to spend it for others; but practise it, and keep on practising it, and I assure you it comes to be a pleasure." It was a saying of Julius Cæsar that no music was so charming in his ears as the requests of his friends, and the



supplications of those in want of his assistance. Our Lord did not say that there was no blessedness in receiving, only that it is *more* blessed to give. We may feel how true are his words in relation to—

I. GIVING PRESENTS. These not only win and keep our friends, but they greatly increase our love for them by finding it expression.

II. GIVING SYMPATHY. This so greatly blesses us, because we have to fetch up the very best in us if we are to sympathize with sufferers and sinners. We want our holiest power.

III. GIVING KNOWLEDGE. We cannot clear and complete our own knowledge better than by making the effort to impart it to others.

IV. GIVING LOVE. It is very precious to be loved, but it is surely more precious to love, to give our love to another; it is so ennobling and inspiring that we give our love to Christ.

V. GIVING PRAYERS. Intercessory prayers are the holiest kind, and the most directly and abundantly fruitful in blessings to ourselves.

Let us bear in mind that the blessedness of giving we all can win. All of us *can* give, and we all can give in the various possible ways of giving above referred to. Those even that seem to have nothing yet can give, if a comprehensive view of giving be taken. A poor widow who had only two mites could give. Our Lord himself, though he had nothing, could give. Peter and John could say, "Silver and gold have we none, but such as we have we give thee." There are better things to give away than money; and it is in such things that we find the best blessedness of giving.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1.—*When it came to pass that we were parted from them, and had set sail for it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, A.V.; Cos for Coos, A.V. and T.R.; next day for day following, A.V. Parted from them (ἀπορρασθέντας). "Non sine desiderio magno" (Bengel). "He shows the violence of the parting by saying, 'Having torn ourselves away'" (Chrysostom). The word is properly applied to those who have been unwillingly torn away from their friends (Schleusner and Kuinoel); "denotes the painful separation wrung from them by necessity" (Meyer). In ch. xx. 30 it was used in the active voice of false teachers "drawing away" the disciples, i.e. Christians, after them. In 2 Mac. xii. 10 it means simply "withdrawn," and so perhaps also in Luke xxii. 41, though Meyer thinks that St. Luke chose the unusual word to denote the urgent emotion by which our Lord was as it were compelled to leave the companionship of the apostles, and be alone. Σπᾶν (whence *spasm*) and its derivatives, of which Luke uses four—two of which are peculiar to him—are much employed by medical writers, as Hippocrates, Galen, Antæus, etc. (Hobart, on Luke xxii.). Had set sail (ἀναχθῆναι ἡμᾶς). The word means "to go up to the sea from the land," as Luke viii. 22; ch. xiii. 18; xvi. 11; xxvii. 12; just as, on the contrary, κατὰγειν and κατὰγεσθαι are used*

of coming down to land from the sea (see ver. 3 in the T.R., and ch. xxvii. 3; xxviii. 12). The same conception of putting out to sea being a going up, led to the phrase μετέωρος (high up) being applied to ships out at sea. From μετέωρος comes, of course, our word "meteor." Cos, or Coos, for it is written both ways, now called by the Turks *Stanko* (ἐς τὰν Κῶ), a beautiful island, nearly opposite the Gulf of Halicarnassus, and separated from Cnidus by a narrow strait, about six hours' sail from Miletus. There is a city of the same name on its eastern coast. It was one of the six Dorian colonies which formed the confederation called the Dorian Hexapolis. It was famous for its wine and its textile fabrics (Howson, and Lewin, and 'Dict. of Geog.'). Rhodes (Ῥόδος); perhaps the "Isle of Roses;" the well-known mountainous island in the Ægean Sea, which lies nine or ten miles from the coast of Caria. Its inhabitants were Dorians, and it was one of the places which claimed the honour of being the birthplace of Homer. The towns are all situated on the seacoast. "Rhodes was the last Christian city to make a stand against the Saracens" (Howson). Patara (Ῥά Πάτρα). A flourishing commercial city on the south-west coast of Lycia, with a good harbour. It was the port of Xanthus, the capital of Lycia. The name *Patera* is still attached to some extensive ruins on the seashore not far from the river Xanthus.

Ver. 2.—*Having found a ship crossing for finding a ship sailing, A.V.; Phœnicia for*

*Phœnicia, A.V.; set sail for set forth, A.V.* Having found a ship. The ship in which St. Paul and his companions had hitherto sailed was probably a coasting-vessel, intending to continue its course all along the south coast of Asia Minor. But at Patara they found a ship on the point of sailing across the open sea direct to Tyre, by which the voyage would be shortened many days. They accordingly immediately took their passage by it, and put out to sea (*ἀνέχθημεν*, ver. 1, note). A glance at the map will show what a great corner was thus cut off. A straight line from Patara to Tyre leaves Cyprus just on the left.

Ver. 3.—*And for when, A.V.; come in sight of for discovered, A.V.; leaving it. . . we sailed for we left it. . . and sailed, A.V.; unto for into, A.V.* Had come in sight of; literally, *had been shown Cyprus*; had had Cyprus made visible to us; *i.e. had sighted Cyprus*. It is a nautical expression. Meyer compares the phrase *πιστεύωμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* for the grammatical construction. The verb *ἀναβαίω* is peculiar to St. Luke, occurring elsewhere in the New Testament only in Luke xix. 11. It is, however, used repeatedly in the LXX. of Job. Landed; *κατήχθημεν*, T.R., just the opposite to the *ἀνέχθημεν* of ver. 2; but the R.T. has *κατήλθομεν*, with the same meaning, “we came to shore.” At Tyre, which they may have reached in about forty-eight hours from Patara with a fair wind (Howson). Tyre at this time was still a city of some commercial importance, with two harbours, one north and one south of the causeway which connected the island with the mainland (see ch. xii. 20). Howson thinks the ship in which St. Paul sailed may have brought wheat from the Black Sea, and taken up Phœnician wares in exchange. The sight of Cyprus as he sailed by must have brought many and very various memories to the apostle’s mind, of Barnabas, of Sergius Paulus, of Elymas, and many others.

Ver. 4.—*Having found the disciples for finding disciples, A.V. and T.R.; and these for who, A.V.; set foot in for go up to, A.V. and T.R.* Having found the disciples. If the R.T. is right, the meaning is that they had sought out the Christians, apparently not a large body, scattered in the city, and perhaps with some difficulty found them and their place of meeting. This would look as if they were not Jews, as the synagogue was always known. He should not set foot in Jerusalem. The R.T. reads *ἐπιβαίνειν* for *ἀναβαίνειν*. It is true that, in the LXX. of Deut. i. 36, *τὴν γῆν, ἐφ’ ἣν ἐπέβη* means “The land that he hath trodden upon;” and that in Josh. i. 3 again, *Πᾶς ὁ τόπος ἐφ’ ὃν ἂν ἐπιβῇτε τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ*

*ποδῶν ὑμῶν* means “Every place on which you shall tread with the sole of your feet;” but the phrase *ἐπιβαίνειν εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ* must surely mean simply “to go to Jerusalem.” Through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed to them, as he did to many others (ver. 11 and ch. xx. 23), that bonds and affliction awaited St. Paul at Jerusalem. The inference that he should not go to Jerusalem was their own.

Ver. 5.—*It came to pass that we had accomplished for we had accomplished, A.V.; the days for those days, A.V.; on our journey for our way, A.V.; they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way for they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, A.V.; kneeling down on the beach we prayed for we kneeled down on the shore and prayed, A.V. and T.R.* Accomplished the days. There is no other example of this use of the word *ἐξαρτίζω*, which always means “to fit out,” “to equip thoroughly,” as *e.g.* Josephus, ‘Ant. Jud.’ iii. ii. 2, where he speaks of soldiers *τοῖς ἀπασὶ καλῶς ἐξαρτισμένους*, well equipped in all respects; and in the only other passage in the New Testament where it occurs, 2 Tim. iii. 17, where it is rendered “thoroughly furnished,” or “furnished completely,” R.V. Hence some would render the passage here “when we had refitted (the ship) during these days.” But this is a very harsh construction, and it is better, with the glossaries, lexicons, the Vulgate, and most commentators, to take the word here in the unusual sense of “to complete,” applied to time. *The days* are the seven days mentioned in ver. 4, which were probably determined by the time it took to unlade the ship and get the new cargo on board.

Ver. 6.—*And bade each other farewell; and we went on board the ship, but, etc., for and when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and, etc., A.V. and T.R.* The *ἀπασπάζεσθαι* of the R.T. occurs nowhere else, except in Himerius in the fourth century after Christ. Went on board; *ἐπέβημεν εἰς*, the same phrase as *ἐπιβαίνειν εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ* in ver. 5.

Ver. 7.—*The voyage for our course, A.V.; arrived at for came to, A.V.; we saluted for saluted, A.V.* When we had finished; *διανύσαντες*, only found here in the New Testament, but not uncommon in classical Greek for finishing a voyage, or a journey, or a race-course (Euripides, Hesiod, Xenophon, etc.). St. Luke seems to indicate by the phrase that the sea-voyage ended here. Arrived at; *κατηντήσαμεν*, a favourite word of St. Luke’s for arriving at a place (ch. xvi. 1; xviii. 19, 24; xx. 15; xxv. 13; xxvii. 12, etc.). Ptolemais. The ancient *Accho* of Judg. i. 31, then a Canaanite city in the tribe of Asher, but not subsequently

mentioned in the Old Testament. In 1 Macc. v. 15, 22 and elsewhere it is called, as here, *Ptolemais*, having received the name from one of the Ptolemies, probably either Soter or Lagi; but in the Middle Ages it appears as St. Jean d'Acre, and is now commonly called Acre. It lies on the north side of the spacious bay of Carmel, but is not in all weathers very safe harbourage. It is an easy day's sail, under thirty miles, from Tyre. When St. Paul was there it had recently been made a Roman colony by the Emperor Claudius, and was important as a commercial city. Saluted the brethren. The Christians there. We have no account of the evangelization of Ptolemais. Perhaps the gospel was first preached there to the Jewish colony by those who travelled "as far as Phœnice," after "the persecution that arose about Stephen" (ch. xi. 19); for Ptolemais was reckoned as belonging to Phœnicia (Ptol., v. 15; Strabo, xvi. p. 758; Pliny, 'Nat. Hist.,' v. 17; all quoted by Meyer).

Ver. 8.—*On the morrow for the next day A.V.; we for we that were of Paul's company, A.V. and T.R.; entering . . . we for we entered . . . and, A.V.; who for which, A.V.* Unto Cæsarea. They seem to have come from Ptolemais to Cæsarea by land, a two days' journey; the word *ἐξελεύσιντες*, as Howson justly remarks, pointing to a land-journey. Philip the evangelist. When last we heard of him (ch. viii. 40) he had just reached Cæsarea; apparently he had been working there as an evangelist ever since. His old home at Jerusalem (ch. vi. 5) had been broken up by the persecution (ch. viii. 5), and thus the deacon had become an evangelist (ch. viii. 12). *Evangelists* are mentioned by St. Paul (Eph. iv. 11) as one of the higher orders of the Christian ministry; and Timothy is bid "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5). In later times the term was restricted to the four writers of the Gospels. Philip's old association with Stephen in the diaconate must have been keenly remembered by St. Paul. We abode with him. This seems to imply that Philip was well to do, and had a good house.

Ver. 9.—*Now this man for and the same man, A.V.* Virgins. This certainly conveys the impression that they had dedicated their lives to the service of God (1 Cor. vii. 34—38). Which did prophesy. The question arises—Did they exercise their gift of prophecy in the Church or in private? The passage 1 Cor. xi. 5 seems to indicate that in the Church of Corinth women did pray and prophesy in the congregation, while, on the other hand, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35 seems peremptorily to forbid women to speak or teach in Church, as does 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. How, then, is this apparent contradiction to be re-

conciled? It must be either by supposing (1) that the gift of prophecy spoken of here and in 1 Cor. xi. 5 was exercised in private only; or (2) that the prohibition did not apply to the extraordinary operation of the Holy Spirit speaking by prophet or prophetesses as the case might be. The latter seems the most probable (see ch. xiii. 1, note). On the office of prophets in the early Church, see ch. xi. 27; xiii. 1; xv. 32; xix. 6; Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 29; xiii. 2, 8; xiv. 6, 29, etc.; Eph. iii. 5; iv. 11; 1 Thess. v. 20 (see Alford, on ch. xi. 27). As regards these daughters of Philip, there are conflicting statements in early Church writers. Eusebius ('Ecc. Hist.,' iii. 30) quotes Clement of Alexandria as saying that both Peter and Philip among the apostles were married and had children, and that Philip moreover gave his daughters in marriage to husbands. But in the next chapter (31) he quotes Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus at the end of the second century, as saying that Philip the apostle and his two daughters, who had grown old in their virginity, were buried at Hierapolis; and that another daughter of his, "who had her conversation in the Holy Spirit," was buried at Ephesus. Eusebius himself thinks that these daughters of Philip the evangelist were meant. If they were, it does not necessarily follow that those who, according to Clemens Alexandrinus, were married were of the four mentioned here. They might be sisters. Polycrates seems to speak of three sisters who lived a religious life (in the technical sense); the fourth may have died young. But it is quite possible that Clemens may really be speaking of Philip the apostle, and Polycrates also; the more so as Philip the apostle, according to the tradition recorded by Nicephorus, suffered martyrdom at Hierapolis. However, the confusion between the two Philips is quite certain in the *Menæum* (or *Calendar*) of the Greek Church, where we read, "On the 4th of September is the commemoration of Saint Hermione, one of the four daughters of the Apostle Philip, who baptized the eunuch of Candace. She and her sister Eutychis came into Asia after the death of the Apostle John. She was buried at Ephesus." A fragment of Caius (in Eusebius, 'Ecc. Hist.,' iii. 31) increases the confusion by speaking of "the four daughters of Philip, prophetesses, who were buried in Hierapolis" (see Routh's 'Reliq. Sac.,' vol. i. pp. 378—380).

Ver. 10.—*Many days (ἡμέρας πλείους).* In ch. xiii. 31 *ἐπὶ ἡμέρας πλείους* is applied to the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. In ch. xviii. 20 *πλείονα χρόνον* is a longer time—longer, viz. than he had intended. In ch. xxv. 6 *ἡμέρας πλείους ἢ δέκα* is "more than ten days." Here, there-



fore, it is too strong an expression to say "many days." According to Lewin's calculation, he was only five days at Cæsarea—from May 10 to May 15. Howson's "some days," which is the rendering also in the margin of the R.T., is much better than "many." Renan has "quelques jours." Agabus (see ch. xi. 28).

Ver. 11.—*Coming to for when he was come unto, A.V.; and taking for he took, A.V.; he bound for and bound, A.V.; feet and hands for hands and feet, A.V. and T.R. Bound his own feet, etc.* The R.T. has *ἐαυτοῦ* which leaves no doubt that Agabus bound his own hands and feet. The reading of the T.R., *αὐτοῦ*, would rather indicate Paul's hands and feet, as Grotius, Hammond, and others take it, though less conformably to the context. (For similar symbolical actions of the old prophets, see Isa. xx. 2, 3; Jer. xiii. 1—7; 1 Kings xxii. 11; Ezek. iv. 1—6; xii. 3—7, xxiv. 16—24, etc.) Shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. Nearly the same words as those in which our Lord foretold his own betrayal (Matt. xx. 19; Mark x. 33; Luke xviii. 32).

Ver. 12.—They of that place; *οἱ ἐντόκιοι*, a word found only here in the New Testament, and not found in the LXX. or the Apocrypha, but good classical Greek (for the sentiment, see ver. 4).

Ver. 13.—*What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? A.V.* (the same sense only a more modern idiom). Breaking. *συνθρῦπτοντες* occurs only here in the New Testament, or indeed in any Greek writer, though the simple form, *θρῦπτω*, is common in medical writers, and *ἀποθρῦπτω* occurs in Plato. It has the force of the Latin *frangere animum*, to crush and weaken the spirit. I am ready. Paul's answer reminds us of Peter's saying to our Lord, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison, and to death" (Luke xxii. 33). But Peter's resolve was made in his own strength, Paul's in the strength of the Holy Ghost; and so the one was broken, and the other was kept.

Ver. 14.—The will of the Lord, etc. A beautiful application of the petition in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (comp. Luke xxii. 42).

Ver. 15.—*These for those, A.V.; baggage for carriages, A.V.* We took up, etc. *ἐπισκευαζόμενοι* is the reading of the R.T., as of Mill, Bengel, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Meyer, Alford, etc. It occurs only here in the New Testament, but is common in classical Greek, in the sense of "fitting out for a journey," "lading a ship" or "beasts of burden" with baggage, "collecting baggage," and the like. The *ἀποσκευάζεσθαι* of the A.V. means "to unload," "to get rid of baggage," and thence generally

"to remove," which gives no good sense here.

Ver. 16.—*And there went for there went, A.V.; from for of, A.V.; bringing for and brought, A.V.; early for old, A.V.* Mnason of Cyprus; only mentioned here. He may very probably be one of those Cypriots mentioned in ch. xi. 19, 20, and so have been a disciple before the death of Stephen, and hence properly called an *old* or *early* disciple. If he had been one of St. Paul's converts in the visit to Cyprus recorded in ch. xiii., St. Paul would have needed no introduction to him. The construction of the sentence is involved, and the exact meaning consequently obscure. Kuinoel, Meyer, Howson (in 'Dict. of Bible'), and many more, translate it "conducting us to Mnason," etc., which seems the better translation; not, however, so as to make *ἄγειν Μνάσωνι* equivalent to *ἄγειν πρὸς Μνάσωνα*, which Greek usage will not admit of, but explaining the dative by attraction of the relative *ὃ*, which is governed by *παρὰ*. If it had not been for the intervening *παρ' ὃ ξενισθῆμεν*, the sentence would have run *ἄγοντες πρὸς τὸν Μνάσωνα, κ.τ.λ.* If Mnason, who, consistently with ch. xi. 19, had a house at Jerusalem, had been at Cæsarea at this time, it would be quite unmeaning that disciples from Cæsarea should bring Mnason with them. The sentence would rather have run "among whom was Mnason," etc. But if he was at Jerusalem, it was quite proper that any Christians of Cæsarea who knew him should conduct Paul to his house, and introduce him and his party to him. Mnason, like Philip (ver. 6, note), was evidently a man of substance. Should lodge; should be hospitably entertained (Heb. xiii. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 9; see ch. x. 6, 18).

Ver. 18.—*Went in with us unto James.* Nothing can mark more distinctly the position of James as Bishop of Jerusalem than this visit of Paul to him, and the finding him surrounded with all the elders of Jerusalem. It is a most distinct evidence of the apostolic origin of the episcopal office.

Ver. 19.—*Rehearsed one by one for declared particularly, A.V.; the things which for what things, A.V.* The things which God had wrought, etc. (comp. ch. xv. 12). It was a noble account to render. Since he had saluted the Church (ch. xviii. 22), when he had probably seen James last, he had laboured at Antioch, in Galatia and Phrygia, and had wrought a mighty revolution in Asia. He had consolidated his work in Macedonia and Achaia; he had held his visitation of Gentile elders in Miletus; he had visited Tyre, Ptolemais, and Cæsarea, great Gentile cities, and had seen everywhere astonishing tokens of the grace of

God which was with him. And now he pours his tale into the ears of the chief pastor of the mother Church of Jerusalem, and those of the Jewish elders. A tale of wonder indeed!

Ver. 20.—*They, when they heard it for when they heard it, they, A.V.; God for the Lord, A.V. and T.R.; they said for said, A.V.; there are among the Jews of them which have believed for of Jews there are which believe, A.V. and T.R.; for the Law for of the Law, A.V. They . . . glorified God.* There is not the slightest symptom on the part of James and the elders of unfriendliness towards St. Paul, or jealousy or opposition to his work among the Gentiles (comp. Gal. ii. 7—9). The appellation brother is another indication of friendly feeling. Thousands (Greek μυριάδες, tens of thousands). These need not be deemed to be all Jerusalem Jews; if applied to the Church at Jerusalem only, such a word would be probably a gross exaggeration; but there were great numbers of Jews of the dispersion assembled at Jerusalem for Pentecost—probably all the Christian Jews of Judæa, and many from Syria, Galatia, Pontus, and the various countries enumerated in ch. ii. 9—11. So that there might be several myriads of converted Jews altogether. All zealous for the Law. This is a remarkable testimony to the unanimity of the Christian Jews in their attachment to the Law of Moses, and throws light upon the Epistle to the Galatians and many other passages in St. Paul's Epistles. It explains the great difficulty experienced in the early Church in dealing with converts from Judaism. *Zealous (ζηλωταί)*. So the fierce sect of Zealots were called at the time of the Jewish wars (see Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.' iv. vi. 1, and elsewhere).

Ver. 21.—*Have been for are, A.V.; concerning for of, A.V.; telling them not for saying that they ought not, A.V.* Have been informed (*κατηχήθησαν*); see ch. xviii. 25; Luke i. 4; Rom. ii. 18, etc. The verb properly means to instruct by word of mouth, whence our "catechism." The customs (*τοῖς ἔθεσι*); see ch. vi. 14, both for the phrase and the sentiment, and ch. xv. 1, note; xxvi. 3; xxviii. 17. *Ἔθος* is a favourite word of St. Luke's, occurring ten times in his Gospel and in the Acts, and only twice in the New Testament elsewhere (John xix. 40; Heb. x. 2<sup>d</sup>; see Hobart, on Luke ii. 27).

Ver. 22.—The R.T. omits the clause in the T.R. rendered *the multitude must needs come together* in the A.V.; *they will certainly hear for they will hear, A.V. and T.R.* The *πάντας*, which in the A.V. belongs to the omitted clause, is rendered "certainly" in the R.T.

Ver. 23.—Which have a vow; meaning emphatically the vow of a Nazarite.

Ver. 24.—*These for them, A.V.; for them for with them, A.V.; shall know for may know, A.V.; there is no truth in the things, etc., for those things . . . are nothing, A.V.; have been for were, A.V.; keeping for and keepest, A.V.* As regards the transaction recommended by James, Kypke (quoted by Meyer) says, "It was a received thing among the Jews, and was reckoned an act of eminent piety, for a rich man to undertake to bear, on behalf of poor Nazarites, the expense of those sacrifices which they had to offer when they shaved their heads at the expiration of their vow." Josephus seems to allude to the custom, and to speak of King Agrippa as acting in accordance with it, when he says of him that he ordered great numbers of Nazarites to be shaved ('Ant. Jud.' xix. vi. 1). The sacrifices were costly, consisting of "three beasts, one for a burnt offering, another for a sin offering, and a third for a peace offering" (Lightfoot, vol. ix. p. 307). Alexander Jannæus is said to have contributed nine hundred victims for three hundred Nazarites ('Dict. of Bible,' under "Nazarite"; comp. 1 Mac. iii. 49). Purify thyself; *ἀγνίσθητι*, the word used in the LXX. of Num. vi. 2, 3, 8 (with its compound *ἀπαγνίσασθαι*, and co-derivatives *ἀγνεία* and *ἀγνός*) for the corresponding Hebrew נָזִיר, to take the Nazarite vow. St. Paul, therefore, became a Nazarite of days for seven days, intending at the end of the time to offer the prescribed sacrifices for himself and his four companions (see, however, note on ver. 26, at the end). Be at charges for them (*δαπάνησον ἐν αὐτοῖς*). Make the necessary expenditure on their account, that they may shave their heads, which they could not do till the prescribed sacrifices were offered.

Ver. 25.—*But as for as, A.V.; have believed for believe, A.V.; wrote giving judgment for have written and concluded, A.V.;* the R.T. omits the clause rendered *that they observe no such thing, save only*, in the A.V.; *should keep for keep, A.V.; sacrificed for offered, A.V.; what is strangled for strangled, A.V.* As touching the Gentiles, etc. What follows is, of course, a quotation from "the decrees that had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem" (ch. xvi. 4), of which the text is given in ch. xv. 19, 20, 28. Observe the use of the identical words—*κρίνω*, in ch. xv. 19; xvi. 4; and in this verse; and of *ἐπιστέλλω*, in this verse and in ch. xv. 20, with its cognate *διεστείλαμεθα* and *ἀπεστάλκαμεν*, ch. xv. 24, 27. This reference on the part of James to the decrees was very important as a confirmation of "the gospel which Paul preached among the Gentiles" (Gal. ii. 2).

It also marks distinctly the upright and honourable conduct of James, and the concord of the apostles.

Ver. 26.—*Went for entered, A.V.; declaring the fulfilment for to signify the accomplishment, A.V.; the offering was for that an offering should be, A.V.* Paul took the men. St. Paul's acquiescence in James's advice is an instance of what he says of himself (1 Cor. ix. 20), and is in accordance with his conduct in circumcising Timothy (ch. xvi. 3). But that he did not attach any intrinsic importance even to circumcision, and much less to the minor Jewish ceremonies, is clear from such passages as Rom. i. 28, 29; 1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. v. 6; vi. 15; Phil. iii. 3, etc. Purifying himself with them, etc. (*ἀγνισθῆναι*); see note on ver. 24. James's advice had been *τοὺτους παραλαβὼν ἀγνισθῆναι σὺν αὐτοῖς*: in obedience to that advice St. Paul now *παραλαβὼν τοὺς ἄνδρας σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀγνισθῆναι εἰσῆλθαι εἰς τὸ ἱερόν*. What was the particular form by which a person who wished to associate himself with others under a Nazaritic vow (note on ver. 24) did so is not known; nor how long before the expiration of the vow such association must be made. But from the mention of "seven days" in ver. 27 (which is the number named in Numb. vi. 9, in case of an accidental uncleanness), it seems highly probable that "seven days" was the term during which a person must have conformed to the Nazaritic vow to entitle him to "be at charges," as well, perhaps, as the time during which Nazarites, at the end of their vow, had to undergo special purification. Declaring the fulfilment, etc. The vow of the four men had been for at least thirty days (the minimum period of such vow); but whatever length of time it had been for, such time would have expired by the end of the seven days, and probably long before. We know not how long they might have been waiting for some one to "be at charges" for them, and provide the sacrifices, without which they could not shave their heads and accomplish their vow. But it is obvious that some notice must be given to the priests in the temple of the day when one or more Nazarites would present themselves at "the door of the tabernacle of the congregation," to offer the prescribed offerings. And this accordingly Paul and the four did. *Διαγγέλων* means "notifying," or "declaring," to the priests (Exod. ix. 16 [LXX., answering to the Hebrew דָּבַר]; Rom. ix. 27; Josh. vi. 9, LXX. [10, A.V., "bid"]). Until the offering was offered, etc. This is interpreted in two ways. Meyer makes "until" depend upon "the fulfilment of the days," so as to define that fulfilment as not taking place till the offering was offered. Wieseler makes "until" depend upon "he entered

into the temple," with the idea supplied, "and remained there," or "came there daily;" supposing that it was the custom for Nazarites to finish up their time of separation by passing the last seven days, or at least being present daily, in "the court of the women, where was the apartment appropriated to the Nazarites" (Lewin, ii. p. 142). If, however, with Howson, Lewin and others, we understand the word *ἀγνισθῆναι*, in vers. 24 and 26, not generally of taking the Nazarite vow, but of certain special purifications at the close of a Nazaritic vow, which lasted seven days immediately before the offerings were made and the head shaven, then a very easy and natural rendering of the words follows: "Notifying their intention of now completing the seven days of their purification, until the offering for each of them was offered." Alford, *in loc.*, justifies by examples the aorist indicative *προσηνέχθη*, instead of the subjunctive, which is more usual. Lewin thinks that St. Paul had taken a Nazaritic vow after his escape from death at Ephesus, or at Corinth; but there is no evidence of this, and it is hardly consistent with James's advice. Renan thinks it doubtful whether or no Paul took the Nazaritic vow at all, but inclines to this as the best interpretation ('St. Paul,' p. 518, note).

Ver. 27.—*Completed for ended, A.V.; from for which were of, A.V.; multitude for people, A.V.* The seven days; showing clearly that some customary term of preparation for the offerings and shaving of the head is meant. This shows also that "the days" in the preceding verse meant the "seven days" of preparation rather than "the days" of the whole Nazaritic vow. The Jews from Asia; come up for Pentecost. How hostile the Asiatic Jews were appears from ch. xix. 9. When they saw him in the temple, whither he had come to complete the seven days of preparation. It was apparently the fifth day (see ch. xxiv. 11, note). How often the best meant attempts at conciliation fail through the uncharitable suspicions of a man's opponents! *The temple*. It must be remembered throughout that it is τὸ ἱερόν that is spoken of, which embraces the temple courts, not the *ναός*, or house (see ch. iii. 2, note). Stirred up. *Συγχέω* is found only here in the New Testament. Properly "to confuse," like the kindred *συγχύω* (ch. ii. 6; xix. 32; xxi. 31); and *σύγχυσις*, confusion (ch. xix. 29); hence "to stir up." It is of frequent use in medical writers (Hobart, lxxix.).

Ver. 28.—*Moreover he for further brought, A.V.; defiled for polluted, A.V.* (For the accusation, comp. ch. vi. 13, and above, ver. 21.) Brought Greeks also, etc. No uncircumcised person might go beyond the court of the



Gentiles, which was not in the ἄγιον. The *ιερόν*, which is often used in a wider sense of the whole area, is here restricted to the ἄγιον (see ch. iii. 1, note). But the accusation was utterly false, the offspring of their own fanatical suspicions. Defiled (κεκοίνακε); literally, *made common* (see ch. x. 15; xi. 9).

Ver. 29.—*Before seen for seen before*, A.V.; *the Ephesian for an Ephesian*, A.V. Trophimus (see ch. xx. 4). Having seen him with St. Paul in the city, they concluded that he had come with him into the temple.

Ver. 30.—*Laid hold on for took*, A.V.; *dragged for drew*, A.V.; *straightway for forthwith*, A.V. The doors were shut. The doors of the gates which separated the ἄγιον, or as Luke here styles it the *ιερόν*, from the court of the Gentiles. They turned Paul out of the *ιερόν*, intending to kill him, and shut the doors, lest, in the confusion and the swaying to and fro of the crowd, the precincts of the temple should chance to be defiled with blood, or even with the presence of any who were unclean (see the passages from Josephus, quoted by Lewin, vol. ii. p. 142, note 11).

Ver. 31.—*Were seeking for went about*, A.V.; *up to for unto*, A.V.; *confusion for an uproar*, A.V. Tidings; φάσις, only here in the New Testament. The legal use of the word in Greek is an "information" against any one laid before a magistrate. Here it is the information conveyed to the tribune by the sentinels on guard (Lange; see Hist. of Susanna 55). Came up; viz. to the castle of Antonia, to which steps led up from the temple area on the north-west side (see vers. 32 and 35). The chief captain; the chiliarch, or tribune; literally, *the commander of a thousand men* (see John xviii. 12). The band (τῆς σπείρης); the cohort which formed the Roman garrison of Antonia (see ch. x. 1, note; also vers. 32, 33, etc.; ch. xxii. 24, 26, etc.).

Ver. 32.—*And forthwith he for who immediately*, A.V.; *upon for unto*, A.V.; *and they, when, etc., left off for and when they, etc., they left*, A.V.; *beating for beating of*, A.V. Ran down upon (κατέδραμεν ἐπὶ). Κατατρέχω only occurs here in the New Testament, but is used in the LXX. of 1 Kings xix. 20, followed by ἐπίσω, to run after. In classical Greek it governs an accusative or genitive of the person or thing attacked. Here the force of κατά seems to be merely the running down from the castle of Antonia, and therefore the A.V. *unto* seems preferable to the R.V. *upon*.

Ver. 33.—*Laid hold on for took*, A.V.; *inquired for demanded*, A.V. Laid hold on (ἐπέλαβον); see ch. xvii. 19, note. Bound with two chains; as St. Peter was (ch. xii. 6). ἄλυσις means properly "a chain on the hands" as opposed to πέδη, a fetter (Mark v.

4); and therefore the two chains are not to be understood of chains on his hands and feet, with Kuinoel, but, as in the case of Peter, of chains fastening him to a soldier on both hands.

Ver. 34.—*Shouted for cried*, A.V. and T.R.; *crowd for multitude*, A.V.; *uproar for tumult*, A.V.; *brought for carried*, A.V. The certainty. He could not get at the truth because of the tumult and the different accounts given first by one and then by another. The Greek word τὸ ἀσφαλές, and its kindred ἀσφαλέα, ἀσφαλῶς, ἀσφαλίζω, and ἐπισφαλής, are of frequent use by St. Luke (ch. ii. 36; v. 23; xvi. 23, 24; xxii. 30; xxv. 26; xxvii. 9; Luke i. 4). These words are all very much used by medical writers, and specially the last (ἐπισφαλής), which is used by St. Luke alone in the New Testament. The castle (τὴν παρεμβολήν), "the camp or barracks attached to the tower of Antonia" (Alford); ch. xxii. 24; xxiii. 10, 16, 32. It means the castle-yard within the fortifications, with whatever buildings were in it.

Ver. 35.—*Crowd for people*, A.V. Borne of the soldiers. Lifted off his legs and carried up the steps. The stairs from the temple area at the north-west corner to the castle of Antonia (see ver. 31, note, and ver. 32). Alford quotes the description of the fort Antonia in Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' v. v. 8, in which he says (Traill's translation), "Its general appearance was that of a tower with other towers at each of the four corners. That at the south-east angle rose to an elevation of seventy cubits, so that from thence there was a complete view of the temple. Where it adjoined the colonnades of the temple it had passages leading down to both, through which the guards—for in the fortress there always lay a Roman legion—descended and disposed themselves about the colonnades in arms at the festivals, to watch the people, and repress any insurrectionary movement."

Ver. 36.—*Crying out for crying*, A.V. Away with him. The cry of those who thirsted for the blood of Jesus Christ (Luke xxiii. 18; see also ch. xxii. 22, where the sense comes out fully).

Ver. 37.—*About to be brought for to be led*, A.V.; *saith for said*, A.V.; *say something for speak*, A.V.; *and he for who*, A.V.; *dost thou know for canst thou speak*, A.V. About to be brought into the castle. He had nearly reached the top of the stairs, and there was, perhaps, a brief halt while the gates of the castle-yard were being opened. Paul seized the opportunity to address Lysias in Greek. Dost thou know Greek? (Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις). According to some, λαλεῖν is to be understood, "Dost thou know how to speak Greek?" after the analogy of

ἀλαλοῦντες Ἀζωτιστὶ, and Οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐπιγινώσκοντες λαλεῖν Ἰουδαίιστῃ, in Neh. xiii. 24. But others (Meyer, Alford, etc.) say that there is no ellipse of λαλεῖν, but that Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκειν, Συριστὶ ἐπισταμένους (Xenophon), “Græcè nescire” (Cicero), mean to know or not to know the Greek and Syrian languages.

Ver. 38.—*Art thou not then the for art not thou that, A.V.; stirred up to sedition for madest an uproar, A.V.; led for leddest, A.V.; the four thousand men of the Assassins for four thousand men that were murderers, A.V. Art thou not then, etc.? or as Meyer, ‘Thou art not then;’* either way implying that Lysias had concluded that he was the Egyptian, but had now discovered his mistake. The Egyptian, etc. He whom Josephus calls (‘Bell. Jud.,’ ii. xiii. 5) “the Egyptian false prophet,” and relates that, having collected above thirty thousand followers, he advanced from the desert to the Mount of Olives, intending to overpower the Roman garrison and make himself tyrant of Jerusalem, with the help of his δορυφόροι, or body-guard, who might very probably be composed of the Assassins or Sicarii, mentioned in the text. Stirred up to sedition (ἀναστατώσας). The difference between the A.V. and the R.V. is that the former takes the verb in an intransitive sense, “to make an uproar,” the latter in a transitive sense, governing the “four thousand men.” In the only two other places where it occurs in the New Testament (ch. xvii. 6; Gal. v. 12) it is transitive. It is not a classical word. The four thousand men. Josephus, in the above-cited passage, reckons the followers of the Egyptian impostor at above thirty thousand. But such discrepancies are of no account, partly because of the known looseness with which numbers are stated, and Josephus’s disposition to exaggerate; partly because of the real fluctuation in the numbers of in-

surgents at different periods of an insurrection; and partly because it is very possible that a soldier like Lysias would take no count of the mere rabble, but only of the disciplined and armed soldiers such as these Sicarii were. It may be added that Josephus himself seems to distinguish between the rabble and the fighting men, because, though in the ‘Bell. Jud.,’ ii. xiii. 5 he says that Felix attacked or took prisoners “most of his followers,” in the ‘Ant. Jud.,’ xx. viii. 6 he makes the number of slain “four hundred,” and of prisoners “two hundred”—a very small proportion of thirty thousand. The Egyptian had promised his deluded followers that the walls of Jerusalem would fall down like those of Jericho. It is not known exactly in what year the insurrection took place, but it was, as Renan says, “peu de temps auparavant” (‘St. Paul,’ p. 525). The Egyptian himself contrived to run away and disappear; hence the thought that he was the author of this new tumult at Jerusalem. The Sicarii were a band of fanatical murderers, who, in the disturbed times preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, went about armed with daggers, and in broad daylight and in the public thoroughfares murdered whoever was obnoxious to them. Among others they murdered the high priest Jonathan at the instigation of Felix (Josephus, ‘Ant. Jud.,’ xx. vi. 7; ‘Bell. Jud.,’ ii. xiii. 3).

Ver. 39.—*I am a Jew for I am a man which am a Jew, A.V.; in for a city in, A.V.; give me leave for suffer me, A.V. A citizen of no mean city; οὐκ ἀσήμεν πόλεως, an elegant classical expression. Οὐκ ἄσημος Ἑλλήνων πόλις (Euripides, ‘Ion,’ 8).*

Ver. 40.—*Leave for licence, A.V.; standing for stood . . . and, A.V.; language for tongue, A.V. The Hebrew language; i.e. the Syro-Chaldaic which was the vernacular of the Hebrew Jews at that time.*

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—14.—*The steadfast purpose.* One of the most difficult problems of practical life is to know what are the fixed points on which we must not give way, and to which all other considerations must yield, and what are the points which may be yielded under the pressure of conflicting circumstances. A man may be very conscientious, and yet most grievously mistaken, if by his obstinacy on indifferent matters he imperils or defeats great and important results which are incompatible with those smaller matters on which he insists. And again, a man may be very conscientious, and yet may do much practical mischief if he weakly gives way on vital points on which he ought to insist with inflexible steadfastness of purpose. Moreover, without steadfastness and persistence of purpose a man’s course is so vacillating as to be practically useless. He is ever beginning and never finishing; starting on his course and never reaching the end of it; wasting time and energy on purposes which are never fulfilled; incapable of joint action because he can never be depended upon—not from insincerity and falseness, but merely from weakness and instability of will and infirmity of judgment. It is a very important function of true wisdom in the practical business of life to discern

clearly what are the purposes that ought to yield to the pressure of adverse circumstances, and what are those that must be carried out to their end at all risks and at any cost; and it is the true test of manliness and Christian principle to adhere to these last in spite of the persuasions of friends or the vituperation of enemies. The section before us contains the successive steps by which St. Paul carried out the purpose which he had formed of going to Jerusalem and arriving there in time for the Feast of Pentecost. The first distinct announcement of this purpose is made in ch. xx. 16, but it had probably been formed before he left Corinth, as related in ch. xx. 3. What were the exact reasons for it we are left to gather from scattered and incidental notices. It seems to have been connected with his deep love for the Jewish nation (Rom. ix. 1—5), and with the hope to which he clung that, by patience and continuance in well-doing, he should eventually overcome their obduracy of heart and win them to the faith of the gospel. The line which he had marked out for himself was to show himself a true Jew in all things; to respect the Law and the observances of the temple and the customs connected with it; and to bind all the Gentile Churches to the mother Church of Jerusalem in bonds of filial love, of which the offerings collected from the Gentile converts and sent to the poor saints at Jerusalem were the token and the result. In this spirit he came up to Jerusalem “for to worship” (ch. xxiv. 11); in this spirit he brought “alms to his nation and offerings” (ch. xxiv. 17); and in this spirit he purified himself and entered into the temple (ch. xxiv. 18). If his hope was by these means to win his countrymen to Christ, and bring about the predicted salvation of all Israel, this was a purpose to which all else must yield. And so when the “Holy Ghost witnessed in every city that bonds and imprisonment abode him at Jerusalem,” when he was warned by prophetic voices at Tyre and at Cæsarea that every onward step was bringing him nearer to some great affliction, he never flinched one moment from his purpose, but went forward with a willing mind that “the will of the Lord might be done.” Being deeply convinced, probably by the constraining voice of the Holy Ghost within him (ch. xx. 22), that it was the will of God that he should go to Jerusalem, and there witness to the Name of the Lord Jesus, he went, not careful whether he were going to bonds or to death; he went, neither yielding to fear nor allowing his will to be broken by the tears and entreaties of those whom he loved best; he went, to accomplish in prison, and at last under the tyrant’s sword, the noblest mission that was ever committed to a son of man, and to win for himself a crown which will surely be one of the most bright and glorious that will glitter in the kingdom of heaven. And in doing so he has left us the priceless example of a *steadfast purpose*.

Vers. 15—40.—*The compromise.* The introduction of Christianity into the world while the temple was still standing, and the Law of Moses with all its Levitical and ceremonial ordinances was still in force, might have issued in three ways. 1. All converts to the faith of Jesus Christ from among the Gentiles might have been forced to become Jews, as far as submission to the whole Law was concerned. 2. Or the Old Testament might then and there have been superseded by the New, and the Jewish believers as well as the Gentile converts have been brought at once into the possession of Christian liberty and immunity from the whole body of ceremonial observances. 3. Or it might have been provided that, while Jewish believers were still subject to the Law of Moses, those who believed from among the Gentiles should be wholly free from the bondage of the Law, and only subject to the institutions and precepts of Christ. The *first* of these issues was that which was contended for by the bigoted Jews of Jerusalem. They wished that all Christians should be as it were proselytes to Moses, only with the addition of faith in Jesus as the promised and long looked-for Christ. The *second* seems to be that toward which St. Paul’s own opinion gravitated, and which the inexorable logic of the forcible suppression of the Mosaic institutions by the destruction of Jerusalem confirmed as being according to the mind of God. The *third* was a compromise between the two former. And it was a compromise accepted by St. Paul. In deference to the prejudices of the Jewish people, and in a charitable consideration for opinions and feelings which were almost a part of their being, he was willing that the Christian Jews should still observe the laws and customs of their fathers, provided that the Gentile disciples were left absolutely free. And he was willing as a Jew himself



to conform to his brethren's practice in this matter. Whatever may have been his speculative opinion, he was willing to give to the Jewish community the public proof asked for by St. James, that "he himself also walked orderly and kept the Law," and actually joined the four Nazarites in their vow and was at charges with them, and went through the legal ceremonies in the temple with them (ver. 26, and ch. xxiv. 18; xxv. 8). The practical lesson, therefore, plainly is that compromises are lawful and right, provided no essential truth is sacrificed. In the diversity of the human mind, and the diversity of influences to which different minds are subject, it frequently happens, as a matter of fact, that conscientious and upright men, who agree upon many vital and essential truths, disagree upon others which are less important, disagree sharply and pointedly. If both parties are to maintain their own views with unbending rigidity, there can be no common action, no harmony, no peace. A compromise by which both parties, without giving up their own belief, agree to keep the points of difference in the background, and to concede something to each other in practice, is the only possible way of preserving unity and concord. It is the way sanctioned and recommended by the great example of St. Paul. Only we must not forget to notice the further instructive lesson conveyed by this section, that the most laudable and best-planned efforts at conciliation are often doomed to failure by the unreasonable and fanatical violence of those who are most in the wrong. Compromises imply a measure of humility and a sincere love of peace. Where there is an arrogant assumption of infallibility, and an overbearing spirit of domination, men prefer the forcing their own opinion upon others to an equitable compromise, and love subjugation more than peace. The highest wisdom and most exalted piety will propose concessions, which fanatical bigotry will fling back in their teeth. It is in religion as in politics. There will always be a party of irreconcilables. A St. Paul in the depth of his love may offer a compromise to which the Jewish fanatic in his blind bigotry will reply by blows and conspiracies unto death. And yet in the end the love will triumph, and the violence will be laid in the dust.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—17.—*Human affection and sacred service.*** God has so made us and so related us that we find ourselves closely and tenderly attached, one to another, in various bonds. It is impossible that these should not have great influence on our minds as the children and servants of God, great effect on our lives as co-workers with Christ. What is that effect?

**I. HUMAN AFFECTION HAS A LARGE CONTRIBUTION TO OFFER TO SACRED SERVICE.** We find it inciting all the disciples, including "the wives and the children," to accompany Paul on his way, to pray with and for him, and thus to cheer and hearten him (ver. 5). We find it leading Philip (vers. 5—7), and afterwards Mnason (ver. 16) and "the brethren" (ver. 17), to entertain the ambassador of Christ with open-handed and full-hearted friendship. And we find it now constantly leading men and women (1) to educate and train, (2) to entertain, (3) to shelter, (4) to influence by example, (5) to evangelize the sons and daughters of men.

**II. HUMAN AFFECTION SOMETIMES FORCIBLY INTERPOSES BETWEEN MEN AND THE SACRED SERVICE THEY WOULD RENDER.** It did so here. Paul and his party had to tear themselves away from the elders of Ephesus (ver. 1). It required a very great effort to "get away." Clearly the entreaties of affection produced a very strong impression indeed on the susceptible heart of the apostle, and called forth the tender and touching remonstrance of the text (ver. 13). It had a like effect on the mind of the Master himself, and evoked a rebuke of no ordinary strength (Matt. xvi. 21—23). When conjugal, or parental, or filial, or fraternal love lays its detaining hand on the shoulder and says, "Go not on this perilous mission; stay with us in these pleasant places of affection," it is hard for the human soul to resist that gentle but powerful pressure.

**III. HUMAN AFFECTION HAS OFTEN MUCH TO URGE ON ITS OWN BEHALF.** The disciples at Tyre claimed to found their counsels on communications which they had from God himself. They said "through the Spirit" that Paul "should not go up,"

etc. (ver. 4). Undoubtedly the disciples at Casarea based their dissuasions on the announcements of Agabus (ver. 11), and they probably pleaded, with no little force, that the Divine intimation of danger was given on purpose that the impending evil might be averted. Often with us, now, human affection has much to say that is plausible, and even powerful. It makes out a strong case why special spiritual faculty should refrain from sacrificing itself by presumptuous confidence, why it should "not tempt the Lord its God" by running into needless danger, why it should reserve itself for other paths of usefulness where it could walk with equal fruitfulness and without the threatening injury.

IV. CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS RISES ABOVE THE STRONG TEMPTATION. With Paul it "will not be persuaded" (ver. 14); with him it says, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die . . . for the Name of the Lord Jesus" (ver. 13). The Huguenot will not have the white ribbon bound round his arm even by the tender hand of the sweetest human love. Men will walk to the stake, and women to the open grave wherein their living bodies are to be enclosed, even though there are voices, gentle and strong, calling them to the home of affection. The will of the Divine Saviour has been found, and will be found to the end of time, mightier than even these forces of affection.

V. HUMAN AFFECTION WILL RECOGNIZE ITS DUTY AND ACCEPT THE WILL OF GOD. It still says, after a while, "The will of the Lord be done" (ver. 14).—C.

Vers. 18—26.—*Relations between disciples.* Our Lord has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 35). It was of the very last importance that, in the early days of Christianity, there should be inward harmony and outward concord among the disciples of Jesus. Division would have been grave disaster, if not irreparable defeat. But with the strongest reasons for desiring unanimity and a complete understanding, we have to face—

I. GREAT DELICACY OF POSITION AMONG CHRISTIAN BRETHREN, then as now. There is a great deal really contained in the simple statement, "Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present" (ver. 18). It was a meeting of two streams, differently composed. It was a meeting of those who believed in the Law with the addition of faith in Jesus Christ, and of those who believed in Jesus Christ with a high regard for the Law as a venerable but passing institution. Between these and those the Mosaic Law held a very different position, seriously affecting their views of doctrine, of religious activity, and of daily behaviour. It required the utmost charity and forbearance on the part of both to maintain positively friendly relations. There must have been no little constraint, there was probably some discomfort in the opening interview. Thus is it now, and for a long time will be, between Christian disciples. Differences of social standing, of pecuniary position, of education and refinement, of ecclesiastical connection, of intellectual tendency (to liberalism on the one hand, or conservatism on the other), will interpose between Christian disciples and make their relations delicate, difficult, strained.

II. THE RECONCILING ASPECT. Very wisely indeed Paul passed immediately from the introductory salutation to a full narration of "all that God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry" (ver. 19). This was striking the true note,—the note that brought peace and concord; "when they heard it, they glorified the Lord" (ver. 20). It is certain that if Paul had spoken in an argumentative strain they would not have been thus unanimous; but they all rejoiced to know that through his instrumentality though he had worked with different weapons from those in their hands—men and women had been turned from dumb idols to serve the living God. This is the reconciling aspect in which to present our cause. However our distinctive views may differ from those of the men whom we meet in conference, or before whom we lay our case, if we can relate a true and simple story of souls converted, of lives transformed, of families or tribes or islands altogether changed and renewed "in the spirit of their mind," we go a long way—if not *all* the way—to convince those who hear that we are "disciples of Christ indeed;" they will glorify God in us.

III. CONFORMITY AND NONCONFORMITY. It remains in doubt whether the expedient of James and of his friends was wise or unwise (vers. 20—24). Certainly it failed in its object. It is also in doubt whether Paul, with his views, was right in yielding to the wish of the elders (ver. 26); certainly by doing so he endangered his life and lost his

liberty without securing his end. But there are some certainties here. 1. That it is right to look at the question before us from our opponent's point of view. 2. That it is wise to conform as far as possible to our opponent's wishes. 3. That we should always be ready to offer or accept an honourable compromise (ver. 25). 4. That the utmost scrupulousness cannot prevent ill-natured or bigoted misunderstanding (ver. 21). 5. That nonconformity may be as honourable and advantageous as conformity (Rom. xiv. 4—7).—C.

Vers. 27—40.—*Fanaticism and devotedness.* It is impossible not to read these verses with a smile of contempt in view of the folly and guilt of fanaticism, and, at the same time, with a smile of satisfaction in view of the calmness and nobility of Christian zeal.

I. THE FOLLY AND THE GUILT OF FANATICISM. 1. *Its folly.* (1) In the first place, it employs a weapon with which it is easily matched. It has recourse to violence (ver. 31); but violence is a usage which others can easily adopt, and it may be with more effect (ver. 32). If religion calls in the aid of the sword, it is likely enough to find the sword directed, at the next turn of events, against itself. (2) It uses a weapon which is not at all fitted to its hand. Physical force is not the appointed method for regenerating the world; "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal," but spiritual. The "kingdom not of this world" does not want its servants to "fight" with steel and gunpowder. (3) It assails those who, if it would but consider, are its truest friends. Out of regard for the Law, these fanatical Jews "went about to kill" Paul. The multitude shouted "Away with him!" (ver. 36). But if they had known better they would, out of regard for the Law, have speeded Paul on his mission. For Judaism, pure and simple, would inevitably have perished; but Judaism, as surviving in the truths and institutions of Christianity, is destined to last as long as time itself, and to be universal in its range. Had they thought more and looked further, they would have honoured him whom they were in such haste to kill. 2. *Its guilt.* (1) It charges a man with a crime of which he is absolutely innocent (vers. 28, 29). (2) It proceeds to punish without giving a chance of defending (vers. 30, 31). (3) It denies to a man that which God has bestowed, and which it claims for itself—a right to his convictions. (4) It dashes itself blindly and vehemently against the purposes of God. At this time it was striking at Christ's chosen ambassador, and, without exception, the most useful servant of God then living. At many times since then, it has stricken the men who represented the truth of Christ, and has done sore evil to the Church, and so to the world.

II. THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS. How admirably the attitude of Paul contrasts with the movements of this excited, tumultuous, sanguinary mob! We admire (1) his courage in placing himself in the position; (2) his calmness throughout (vers. 37—39); (3) his readiness (ver. 40)—he was prepared at any emergency to speak the needful word. We admire it because we are sure that it all rested upon (4) his consecration to the cause, and his assurance of the presence of his Divine Master.—C.

Vers. 1—16.—*Incidents by the way.* I. THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN LOVE TO BRING THE UNKNOWN NEAR. At Tyre Christian disciples, loving Christian hearts, are found. They warn Paul against possible coming dangers, they entertain the little band, and dismiss them with commendatory prayer. "The finding of disciples must have been a main feature in the diaries of the apostle." To meet with welcome, with hospitality, with congenial discourse upon journeys,—how refreshing! Well may it remind us of the universal providence, and the living love which is ever at work to overcome strangeness, and to bring the far-off near! Delays in business need be no delays in the work of the kingdom of God. While the departure from Tyre was delayed, Paul found time to instruct the disciples at Tyre.

II. PHILIP THE EVANGELIST. The name is an excellent one for a true teacher. It means one who carries the *good news*. All that we know of him from ch. vi. 5; viii. 5; 26, 46, and his earnest preaching of Jesus, bears out this character. It seems to have been his object and his peculiar gift to make clear from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. The gift of his daughters seemed to be a fulfilment of Joel's



prophecy (iii. 1). They present the type of the calling of all Christian women to appropriate forms of Christian service.

III. AGABUS AND THE GIRDLE OF PAUL. He gives a symbolic prophecy of coming trial. The girdle might be a symbol of complete dedication to the service of the Lord Jesus and of his gospel—of Christian duty. The loins once girt up must not be relaxed. Only when the will has been subdued to God and his service are we truly free; and this even when others would use compulsion upon us. "Then the strong band encircles our life and girds us for eternity." It is a blessing when our eyes are opened to the coming trial, and our hearts are at the same time strengthened to meet it. This gives assurance that all that occurs is according to the blessed will, and must work together for good.

IV. "THE WILL OF THE LORD BE DONE." Often it is harder to contend with the weaknesses of others than with one's own. See Millais's touching picture of the 'Huguenot.' Some silken band of dearest affection would detain us as we are preparing to march to the post of duty (cf. Gen. xliii. 3, 4). Love means well, but does not always point in God's way (John xx. 17). When Luther was on his way to Worms, at place after place warning friends met him; and close to the town his beloved Spalatin sent to him to beg he would not venture into the scene of danger. "Were there as many devils in Worms as tiles on the roofs, I would go in," was his reply. Paul's heart is touched; he feels the spring of manly strength giving way. But with a strong effort of faith and will he overcomes. "I am ready to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus." "Not the cross for the cross's sake, but the cross for the sake of Christ;" to be made like to his death (Phil. iii. 10);—these were the ideals of his life. And so the love of the Christian flock to the pastor must give way to the pastor's love for Christ. "The will of the Lord be done!" It is the best concluding word of all our deliberations. It silences all objections to God's ways; our thoughts must be suppressed before the thought of the Only Wise, and our power bow before that of the Omnipotent. Our affection for others must withdraw its claims in favour of his, whose we are and whom we serve. This motto may well suit the servant of God in all the changes of his pilgrimage, against all the opposition of his foes, against the temptations of flesh and blood, of near and dear affection, and the weakness of his own heart.—J.

Vers. 17—26.—*Paul and the Levitical usages.* Paul's gospel was that of salvation by Christ Jesus alone, as contrasted with the principle of salvation by legal obedience. But he did not contend against the Law and against Mosaism as such—only against the doctrine that the observance was indispensable to salvation. The spirit of evangelical freedom made him tolerant of the observance in the case of born Jews, while at the same time he contended for the emancipation of the Gentile Christians from the claims of the Law (1 Cor. vii. 18, 19).

I. AN EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE IN GENERAL. It is necessary to study and consider human nature as it is. No acting as if in a vacuum, no trying to carry out abstract principles, regardless of men's habit of thinking and acting, can be either right or successful. The followers of Christ were to be "wise as serpents, yet harmless as doves." Want of tact is often a greater hindrance to success than want of greater gifts of head and heart. Men are repelled by disregard of their feelings, and often won over by trifling concessions, which cost nothing important to those who make them or to the cause of truth. But serious cases of conscience may arise under these conditions; and prudence ceases to be a virtue whenever it is practised at the expense of truth or of truthfulness.

II. AN EXAMPLE OF CONCESSION TO THE PREJUDICES OF THE WEAK. In these difficult cases *love* must be the great guiding principle (Rom. xv. 1). Christian love "endureth all things." It has a delicate intelligence of the needs of the weak; it practises a fine self-denial, condescends to the lowlier in word and in deed. In such weakness there is true strength. It demands *intellectual strength*, to distinguish between form and contents, between the shell and the kernel; and *firmness of character*, to hold fast to the main matter, while those of subordinate importance are given up; *constancy* and *faithfulness*, not to deny the law of Christ, while promoting *love* amongst his disciples. In things indifferent we may take a part, provided we clearly

see the way to promote the kingdom of God in so doing; but at the same time, we must do nothing to favour the opinion that such things are necessary to salvation. In the whole episode we may see the victory of love that "seeketh not her own" over bigotry and narrow-mindedness; thus a forecast of the union of Israel and the heathen world in Christ, and a triumph of the Divine counsel in the extension of his kingdom and the diffusion of his thoughts of salvation. With reference to Paul, it illustrates his saying, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to those under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain those under the Law."—J.

Vers. 27—40.—*Danger and deliverance at Jerusalem.* I. THE ACCUSATION AGAINST PAUL. 1. He is represented as an enemy of the Law, like Stephen before him. He has to confront the blind and murderous storm of human passion, more dreadful than the waves of the sea, presently to be encountered. Now is the warning concerning the things to be expected in Jerusalem about to be fulfilled. The sincerest friends of religion have often to incur the charge of being its enemies, the truest worshippers of God are denounced as atheists. 2. As a violator of the temple, he was said to have "made the holy place common." There is a close parallel between this mode of attack and that on Jesus. Great must have been his consolation to find himself treading in the footsteps of his Lord, as his great desire was to be conformable to him. The greatest honour lies in bearing the cross of Jesus, becoming partaker of his sufferings, being "as he was in the world."

II. FURTHER PARALLELS BETWEEN THE TREATMENT OF HIM AND THAT OF THE SAVIOUR. The whole city was in an uproar. He was rejected by his own countrymen—cast out of the temple. They desired to slay him, and yet not stain the sacred place; straining at gnats and swallowing camels. They thought they would do God service in slaying him. At Ephesus, pagan superstition and the love of gain were against him; here, Jewish bigotry and fanaticism. Both scenes are warnings against the misdirection of religious feeling. We need reflection and knowledge to purify the religious instinct, which is like fire, pernicious if not watched and kept under control. The murder of Jesus, and all judicial murders of teachers and leaders, are, considered from the human side, both crimes and blunders.

III. THE IMPRISONMENT OF PAUL. The light and shade mingle in the deed. On the one hand we see human passion, blind folly, wicked hatred, on the part of the Jews; on the other, a bright picture of Christian heroic courage, self-possession, and sweet patience on the part of the apostle. And over and above all the light of Divine leading shines, like a pillar of fire by night. There is the power which protects the servants of God, the wisdom which employs even its adversaries to carry out its designs, the love which makes a centre of light and warmth within the man's "own clear breast." Man proposes, and God disposes. He guides the well-meant counsels of his friends to other ends than they supposed, and the designs of foes to other issues than they had calculated.

IV. THE DELIVERANCE. Rejected by his own people, a friend is raised up for Paul in the person of a heathen. The Roman tribune stills the uproar, saves the apostle's life, gives him the opportunity of clearing himself from the charge against him, affords him liberty of speech. How impressive is the scene with which this chapter closes! There stands the preacher in chains. His pulpit the stairs of the Roman fortress; instead of deacons surrounding and supporting him, rough Roman soldiers. Murderous cries instead of psalms precede his discourse. Instead of a calm audience before him, an enraged mob. But let us draw the veil and look within his heart. There is the spirit of faith and of love, of wisdom and of strength. There is that courage which the consciousness of right and truth inspires, a "good conscience toward God." There was that whole devotion which ever makes its impression on the rudest hearts, and alone gives freedom and joy. Above all, the knowledge of a Saviour and a God, to whom in life or death he belongs, from whom neither life nor death can separate.—J.

Vers. 1—6.—*Miletus to Tyre: the steadfastness of a holy mind.* I. THE TRIAL OF PAUL'S FAITH. In the separation from dear brethren and the prospects of suffering. The long days of quiet thought, sailing through the Greek Archipelago to Cos, Rhodes, Patara, and round the south-west of Cyprus to Tyre, deepened the resolution of his

heart and prepared him to encounter the temptations from weaker brethren. At Tyre the great crisis of his faith came much nearer. Disciples said, "Set no foot in Jerusalem." The conflict was between the voice of the Spirit in the purpose of his heart, and the prophetic warnings of coming danger which he could not doubt. It was not that one command contradicted another command; but that, like Abraham, he had to obey, although to obey must be to suffer. Faith conquered.

II. The trials that are borne in the spirit of humble confidence work out BLESSING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. Sympathy and affection. Prayer. Simplicity and reality. Mutual encouragement—Paul strengthened by the interview; the Christians of Tyre helped to aim at a higher life by contact with such an example of spiritual heroism. Influence on the homes and families. Christianity was already accomplishing a great work in social life. Tyre was commercially decaying, but here was a new principle of prosperity, better than the worldly one. The position of such a port made its Christianity a blessing to the whole world. The visit of Paul would be remembered and spread abroad.—R.

Vers. 7—14.—*Tyre to Cæsarea: the will of God in the heart of his servant.* As the days went on, the pressure upon the heart of Paul increased. The house of Philip the evangelist the scene of the last great test of his preparation for the future. The four virgin daughters, and Agabus from Jerusalem, repeated the prophetic warnings; but no one said by the voice of the Spirit, "Go not." Human voices must sometimes be resisted. Weeping may break a heart, but it ought not to break a resolution formed in the sight of God and by his Spirit. 1. An example of lofty spiritual discernment. Distinguishing between human voices and Divine; between a prospect of suffering and a prospect of defeat; between being bound in body and being bound in spirit—Paul was rejoicing in the liberty of his soul, it was of little consequence to him what they might do with his limbs—between the plots and enmity of men and the victorious grace of God. 2. An encouragement to steadfastness in doing the Divine will. We must not listen to persuasions when God calls us on. We must be ready for all; but, the course being once clearly opened to us, then a humble fixedness of heart is the best preparation for the path of duty. 3. An instance of the controlling influence of character in the Christian Church. The weaker yield to the stronger if the stronger remain firm. Those that think much of external difficulties and dangers have to be lifted out of their weakness by the words and example of the loftier and more heroic souls.—R.

Vers. 15—26.—*Arrival and reception at Jerusalem.* Notice—

I. THE DECIDED ADVANCE IN THE MINDS OF THE LEADING DISCIPLES AMONG THE JEWS. 1. They gladly welcomed Paul, and heard his narrative of missionary work, which included labour among the Gentiles. They glorified God for it. 2. They made no demand upon Paul as to renouncing his advanced position, but acquiesced in it. 3. They must have resisted the extreme Judaistic party in order to do so.

II. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TIMID POLICY OF THE JAMES PARTY AND PAUL HIMSELF. They feared for him. He feared nothing for himself. Their advice was dictated by prudence, but it wrought more evil than good in result.

III. THE NOBLE EXAMPLE OF SELF-ABNEGATION AND CONCILIATION. Paul yielded to their advice, to show that the reports about him were false, and that his free position allowed him both to observe the Law and not to observe it, as expediency might dictate, because he regarded it as no longer necessary to salvation. He became a Jew to the Jews, to save the Jews. The true firmness is not obstinacy, prejudice, self-assertion, bigotry, but distinguishes between the essential and non-essential. Perhaps it was the wiser way to let the weaker brethren be convinced by the facts how hopeless it was to save Judaism.

IV. GREAT PURPOSES OF GOD ARE FULFILLED THROUGH THE ERRORS AND INFIRMITIES OF HIS PEOPLE. Paul would meet Jewish accusations all the more firmly though his appearance in the temple put the torch to the pile.—R.

Vers. 27—36.—*The prophecy fulfilled.* "Bonds and imprisonment."

I. THE TUMULT EXCITED BY ASIATIC JEWS, probably seeking for Paul, with pre-termination to destroy him. It was his faithful missionary labours, therefore, which



lay at the root of the trouble; he knew it, and it helped him to be strong in faith. Christ would protect his own ambassador.

II. THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM WERE UTTERLY FALSE. He raised no opposition to the Law. He never defiled the temple. Trophimus the Gentile had not been brought there. The enemies of truth always depend on lies. False accusation has been always the resort of fanaticism and bigotry when it is afraid for itself.

III. ROMAN DISCIPLINE, as before, is called in to suppress MOB VIOLENCE, and thus help the gospel. So in after times *Roman law* prepared the way for the spread of Christianity. (See Maurice's 'Lectures on the Religion of Rome,' delivered at Edinburgh 1854, published 1855.)

IV. THE SPEEDY RESULT OF THE WEAK ADVICE of the Jewish believers is seen in the apostle within seven days, in imprisonment. The brave policy always the safest. Compromise is danger.—R.

Vers. 37—40.—*The Roman soldier face to face with the Christian apostle.* The heathen, notwithstanding his ignorance, was more open to reason than the Jew, blinded by fanaticism and bigotry. Religion corrupted by priestcraft is worse than scepticism. Courtesy and chivalry may be made to serve higher purposes. The providential appointment of the history of Judaism opened the way for a free gospel. Jews were filling up their cup.—R.

Ver. 5.—*Widening streams of Christian love.* The contents of this verse are almost unique for the day to which they belong. And at the same time they seem to link together some of the best of their own time with some of the best of modern time. The scene is familiar to us, which was once strange enough, and Tyre will be held in remembrance, wheresoever the gospel shall be preached, for one bright, redeeming trait. For we have here a significant token of what Christianity will avail to do, without any direct aim at it for the time being, in and with family life.

I. IT HAS RAISED WOMEN TO SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE WITH MEN THE BENEFITS, THE JOYS, THE SPONTANEOUS OFFICES OF FRIENDSHIP OF WHICH CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHARACTER ARE THE SUBJECT.

II. IT HAS YET MORE SIGNIFICANTLY BROUGHT INTO A NEW KIND OF PROMINENCE A VERY OLD PRECEPT AS TO THE TRAINING UP OF CHILDREN.

III. IT HAS HALLOWED THE COMBINED EFFECT OF THE UNITED LIFE OF THE FAMILY. Nature itself does not make a whole family so really *one* as Christianity does. Many a time we read of a whole family being baptized, when presumably not only the wife but little children were embraced in the number. And now wives and children of the "disciples," in helpful company, cheer the steps of the departing Paul and his special fellow-labourers. True as we feel this was to nature, it is true to a nature that had long become *disaccustomed* to its better self, in those days of Tyre. And Christianity and Christian *occasion* have now begun to enable nature to "lift its head again."

IV. IT HAS FOUND A NEW WAY OF LINKING FAMILY WITH FAMILY. How often is the family unit a wonderfully selfish unit! It is truly something larger than the individual, and so is the selfishness somewhat larger also—larger in its sphere of exposure, and larger in its spreading mischief, and larger in its shame. There are not a few who would be astonished to think they could be taxed with selfishness as individuals, who nevertheless may be powerful factors in making, sanctioning, keeping, the selfishness of the family. This latter covers itself also under many a more sacred name. And because the family should be the very shrine of one affection, those who compose it "do this," but mournfully "leave the other undone." But now family with family attended the departing steps of Paul. And had they never caught the idea before, now they see or begin to see that it takes many a family of men to number up the one family of the "Father," "from whom every family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. iii. 14, 15, see Revised Version).

V. IT FINDS THE GENUINE LARGER FAMILY CIRCLE IN PRAYER. They all "kneeled down on the shore, and prayed." It was a prayer of pilgrim apostles, pilgrim fathers and mothers, and young pilgrim children. 1. Well did they kneel on the *sands*. 2. Well did they pray in sight of life's sea. 3. Well did all lift their eyes and thoughts from sand and sea to heaven in prayer; but meantime forgot selves awhile,

that all might pray for others. Paul prayed for them of Tyre, fathers and mothers and children, that they might love and do and keep the faith. And if no tongue spoke it, who can doubt that the loving, regretful group, who so grudged losing Paul into the midst of the dangers that were waiting for him at Jerusalem, commended him also to God and the Word of his grace? and commended that Word itself to God?—B.

**Ver. 13.—*A tender heart to a strong conscience.*** It might be thought that Paul had already sufficiently run the gauntlet of warnings touching the consequences of going to Jerusalem (ch. xix. 21; xx. 16, 22, 23; xxi. 4, 11). If his resolution could have been altered, or his conscience stilled an hour, this was the hour. But, instead of showing any symptom of being “in a strait betwixt two,” even in an hour of such tenderness, it is now that “his heart is fixed.” The needle points unerringly and without a quivering deflection, and moral resolution touches the point of moral sublimity. And we may justly sound here the praise of conscience; for in advancing degrees, we see—

I. THE PRAISE OF CONSCIENCE, IN ITS ATTITUDE IN THE PRESENCE OF DANGER.

II. THE GREATER PRAISE OF CONSCIENCE, IN ITS ATTITUDE IN THE PRESENCE OF AFFECTION.

III. THE GREATEST PRAISE OF CONSCIENCE, IN ITS ATTITUDE OF COMPLETE SURRENDER TO THE SPIRIT OF PERFECT TRUTH AND PERFECT GUIDANCE.

IV. THE PERFECTION OF THE CONSCIENCE IN ITSELF, WHEN IT OWNS TO NO TREMBLING, NO WAVERING. There was no coldness, no hardness, no unrelentingness of heart, in that grand hour, when Paul's heart was ready to break for human affection's sake, but was a very tower of strength toward Christ as in him.—B.

**Ver. 16.—*A biography of honour, written in a name and title only.*** The slight obscurity attaching to the rendering of this verse diminishes in nothing its interest and instructiveness. Whether the verse purports to say that the disciples of Cæsarea journeying with Paul and his companions brought them to Mnason as their host, when they arrived at Jerusalem; or that, picking up Mnason himself at Cæsarea, who afterwards became the host of Paul at Jerusalem, they rendered him also the help of their escort thither,—does not alter its special significance. This lies in the fact that Mnason's name, as soon as mentioned, is despatched with two remarks, never again to be referred to in the sacred history; and yet those two remarks are felt to be worth more than two volumes. Wherein, then, we may ask, does their special significance hide?

I. THEY ARE TIDINGS OF A MAN WHO HAS RECEIVED CHRISTIAN LIGHT, AND HAS BEEN FAITHFUL TO IT “EVEN TO OLD AGE.”

II. THEY ARE TIDINGS OF A MAN WHO RECEIVED CHRISTIAN LIGHT AT THE RIGHT TIME TO RECEIVE IT—SO SOON AS IT CAME, AND WHEN HE WAS YOUNG.

III. THEY THEREFORE FIX THE DESCRIPTION OF A MAN WHO MUST IN CONSEQUENCE HAVE NOW STORES OF THE BEST KIND OF EXPERIENCE AND STRENGTH.

IV. THEY PROCLAIM A MAN WHOSE CHARACTER HAS A CERTAIN AND AN INDISPUTABLE VALUE, AS A SPEAKING TESTIMONY TO CHRIST HIMSELF AND HIS TRUTH.

V. THEY MAKE A CERTAIN PROMISE BOTH FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD—THE PROMISE OF A MAN WHOSE COMPANY, FRIENDSHIP, HOSPITALITY, AND VERY COUNTEenance GIVEN TO A FELLOW-CREATURE WILL BE A HUNDREDFOLD PROFITABLE.—B.

**Vers. 18—20.—*The advocate of the Gentiles.*** With great determination Paul had made his way to Jerusalem. The public ways terminating in the city were frequented, and the city itself would soon be filled with visitors. Paul knew well in the spirit that stern conflicts and no imaginary dangers awaited him. But before he encountered these he had to count with some other dangers, and which were in some aspects justly more formidable. Paul does not shirk them. He had not come up to desert his colours at the last, nor to prove his faithfulness gone. That a disunited Church should meet the crowd of the world, and even of various ecclesiastical parties, was a thing not to be thought of, certainly not to be allowed. It is *the very thing* that, times without number, since Paul showed the illustrious example to the contrary now, has been the weakness of the Church and the strength of the great foe. It is evident from the passage now before us that Paul's course was a course that meant practically that so

far things should be "en regle," and that nothing should be wanting on his part in order to secure a firm and united front. How many throw the hindrances of self-will and of crotchets into the way at moments the most critical, most inopportune! It is with some particularity that we are here shown how Paul did the opposite. Let us notice—

I. THE FORMAL VISIT OF PAUL TO THE CONSTITUTED CHURCH. It is a visit to the Church as represented by James (who was evidently at present acting as its chief pastor in Jerusalem) and by the elders. There might have been plausible excuse for it if Paul had not thus reported himself to the Church, but he does not put any to the need of searching for its warrant. He comes to the Church; recognizes its reality as a power; recognizes its unity; recognizes it as the source and the depository of much possible future knowledge and wisdom; and recognizes it as the one earthly bar of judgment (so far as there can be one at all) before which either Christian disciple or Christian apostle may stand without infringing the allegiance due either to individual conscience or to the great bar of judgment above, invisible, but ever open and effective.

II. THE SALUTATION OF PAUL. What this salutation was we may gather sufficiently from a comparison of the instances, in all about seventy, in which reference is made to it in the New Testament. In the English Version the thing intended appears under the description of "saluting," "greeting," "embracing," and "taking leave." There can be little doubt that, in the case of persons present with one another, the outward act of recognition, whether of a more or less intimate kind, was accompanied by some expression of Christian wish, or prayer, or gratitude; while in the case of messages, so many of which are found conveyed in the Epistles, the essence of the salutation consisted generally in the ever-grateful significance that lay in the fact of the remembrance of the absent. All the rest, Christian wish, prayer, or thanksgiving, would be readily taken as "understood." In the present instance the special mention of the salutation reminds us justly of the *humane* and inartificial characteristics of Christianity. In sketches of its history of the most solemn import, nothing forbids, conceals, or even obscures their entering in as constituent elements of the whole scene. Even prominence is given to them, and they are not unfrequently the light and colour of the history. The unmeasured steadfastness of Christian principle and truth, is a thing utterly different from unfeeling severity and the expression of the natural instincts of human hearts.

III. THE ADDRESS OF PAUL. It consisted of a faithful—we might almost call it also a dutiful—report of his own mission to the Gentile world. We can see, but, perhaps, can scarcely enter into, the exceeding interest of the subject at Jerusalem. So much hinged on exactly what had taken place, and upon the exact statement by one competent and trustworthy of what had taken place. Hence we may observe the particularity with which even the history rehearses and repeats it. 1. Paul gives God, indeed, the glory of what had been done, but probably also means to make a very pronounced affirmation before the Church at Jerusalem, that the work *was indeed* the work of God, to stop the unbelieving mouth or mind. 2. Paul speaks of the work of his *own ministry*. It is no hearsay, no impression, no hopefulness with which he entertains the listeners. There was not a statement he made, nor an incident he described "particularly," for the full weight and force of which he was not prepared to become guarantor. 3. Paul's subject of address was specially kept to the things that had been accomplished among the Gentiles. Yet we very well know how much of thrilling interest he had met with in his associations with his own people, in addition to the occasions when their fortunes were inevitably linked with the things that happened to the Gentiles. Throughout it is evident what the returned ambassador of Jesus Christ had in his eye and on his heart. In a sense, he staked all on accrediting the Gentiles as heirs of the grace of God, and to be acknowledged as *fellow-heirs* with himself and the Church he was addressing. His own singleness of eye and purity of mind and fidelity to his original call appear in bright and bold relief in all this.

IV. THE RECEPTION ACCORDED TO PAUL'S REPORT. Paul's character was no longer the thing it was when, some years ago, he had *first* visited the Church at Jerusalem as a convert. This is his fifth visit since his conversion. Now for him to testify, and to testify "particularly," was to secure a ready hearing and a trusted attention. 1. They believe *him*. 2. And they "glorify" God. Envy, and bigotry, and pride, and exclusiveness are falling away from that typical Church, "the mother of us all."



Length and breadth are seen and are acknowledged in the gospel of Christ. The world's day has dawned, and the light of it, refused by so many, is entering into the eyes of that meeting of the chief pastor at the time at Jerusalem, and the elders. And they did well to "glorify the Lord" because of it.—B.

Vers. 20—39.—*The pastor and elders of the Church not infallible.* There may be considered to be some uncertainty as to the exact merits of the remarkable case which the history reproduces in this passage, but without rendering any verdict, pronouncing any opinion, or even offering any suggestion. In the room that is accordingly allowed for option, it is believed that the following positions, as they are certainly maintainable in themselves, are also to be impressed on us by the present history :—

I. THE ADVICE OF THE BEST-INTENTIONED POLICY, ON THE LIPS OF THE LEADERS OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH, IS DISTANT FROM THE ADVICE OF CLEAR CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE AND TRUTH, AS THE POLES ARE DISTANT FROM ONE ANOTHER. There was not a little in the exact tone of those who urged on Paul a certain course (ver. 20) and in the exact time which they used for pressing their suit, which invests it with suspicion, and which may very possibly have done so with Paul.

II. THE PRESSURE OF THE ADVICE OF MANY, AND THOSE MANY THE KNOWN LEADERS OF THE CHURCH, WILL NOT ABSOLVE THE INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE OR JUDGMENT. It is quite possible that the present was an occasion which Paul would have described as one of those when he would make himself all things to all men. It is also quite possible that this was a *right* occasion of observing that practice. And lastly, for that very reason the more, it may seem quite possible, that Paul's judgment was in no degree hoodwinked, nor his conscience eclipsed, when he yielded to the advice urged upon him. As no whisper of censure seems breathed upon him, the providence of God, nay, the Spirit himself, may have been his Guide now, to the end that *facts* should teach those who were responsible for the advice, while Paul would feel, ay, genuinely feel, that the compensation that was given to him for his sufferings consisted in the audience of Jew and Gentile of all sorts, of Roman governors and officers and soldiers, which he had in consequence the opportunity of addressing (ver. 39). If Paul *were* mistaken and at fault now, he reaps his punishment, though still he rescues some advantage out of all for Christ and the gospel. And he is taught that not even the kindness of his heart and willingness "to be persuaded" by the skilful representations in affection's hour of others, can be a substitute for the individual, steady, regulated judgment and conscience of the Christian. If he were *not* mistaken, the same lesson is taught, though by a very different route. He himself held and acted upon the conviction that his individual judgment, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, should have its way—that judgment going to this that, though himself suffered, the leaders of the Church and "many thousands of zealots of the Law" should be effectually taught.

III. THE DIVINE PURPOSE AND WORK THROUGH ALL ERROR OF HUMAN JUDGMENT, THROUGH ALL UNCERTAINTY OF FIDELITY, EVEN IN HUMAN CONSCIENCES, TRIUMPH AND VINDICATE THEIR OWN RIGHTS. 1. The intended short way out of an apprehended difficulty and danger, suggested with coaxing tones and words (ver. 20, "Thou seest, brother"), proves a very long and painful way. Who can tell what must have been the excited apprehensions of James and the elders as the riot went on, nor stopped in a sense, till Paul set off for Rome itself? 2. For Paul, whose is both the active work and the keen suffering, "the beginning of the end" dates from this very Church meeting at Jerusalem. The road is opened to Rome and to Cæsar and to "the palace and all other places" left for Paul's ministry. And the goal of his career comes into sight for the racer of keen vision as well as of keen energy. So the gospel gains fresh wings, and that grace of God which lovingly overrules where perhaps it was not allowed to rule, is made known to vaster numbers, and amongst them to some whom it might not have reached in any other way.—B.

Vers. 4, 11.—*The Spirit in Paul, and the Spirit in others.* The narrative given of the apostle's progress toward Jerusalem suggests some serious and difficult questions. We now consider one of them. Once and again it appears as if the Divine Spirit sent messages which should have stopped the apostle, and prevented his going on to the holy city; and St. Paul evidently resisted these attempted hindrances. Then was he right

in so doing? If he was right, how can we explain his conduct? The circumstances may be carefully compared with those narrated concerning the prophet who was unfaithful to the commission distinctly entrusted to himself (see 1 Kings xiii. 1—25). "It seems at first somewhat startling that St. Paul should reject what is described as an inspired counsel; or, if we believe him also to have been guided by the Spirit, that the two inspirations should thus clash. We remember, however, that men received the Spirit 'by measure,' and the prophets of the Churches at Tyre, as elsewhere, though foreseeing the danger to which the apostle was exposed, might yet be lacking in that higher inspiration which guided the decision of the apostle." This explanation is given in a simpler form in the 'Speaker's Commentary.' "The foreknowledge was inspired; the advice based upon it was merely a human inference. St. Paul accepted the information, but did not yield to the warning. Christ's approval of his conduct is implied in ch. xxiii. 11." This suggestion in explanation of the difficulty may be fully considered and illustrated.

I. ST. PAUL HAD DISTINCT LEADINGS OF THE SPIRIT. He had (1) those which were *general* to his apostolic work; and (2) those which were *special* to particular occasions, as e.g. at Troas (ch. xvi. 9). We may, therefore, be quite sure that he knew perfectly well when he was under Divine lead; and, on this occasion, we have evidence that he knew what God's will for him was, and that he was taking the path of duty in going up to Jerusalem. In ch. xx. 22 he distinctly says, "Now I go *bound in the spirit* unto Jerusalem." No doubts or questions disturbed his own mind. He knew that God led; and he knew that, regardless of consequences, it was his simple duty to follow. It may be shown that still, in our day, a man may have a full and clear knowledge of God's will for him, and then he is bound to do that will, however men's prophecies and advice and warnings may entice him aside. When a man has inward conviction of what is *right for him*, all prophesying of consequences becomes temptation to be resisted.

II. OTHERS HAD INTIMATIONS OF FACTS THAT WOULD OCCUR. These came by the Spirit. But carefully note the distinction—no one was commanded, in the Name of the Lord, to tell St. Paul that he must not go up to Jerusalem. We have only the fact noticed that certain persons, in the exercise of their prophetic gift, foresaw the consequences of his so going, and stated what they anticipated. This comes out plainly in the fuller account of what Agabus did and said (ver. 11). His intimation was simply *of facts*. Agabus does not seem to have felt entitled to add any personal persuasions. This distinction between the leadings of the Spirit in St. Paul and the leadings of the Spirit in the prophets and prophetesses, removes all difficulty of antagonistic inspirations. In the apostle the leadings concerned *duty*; in the prophets it concerned only *facts*. What relation the knowledge of the facts had to the doing of duty we shall presently see.

III. OTHERS ADDED PERSUASIONS BASED ON THEIR OWN PROPHETIC KNOWLEDGE. But the persuasions were their own, not the inspiration of God's Spirit, and St. Paul was in no sense bound to follow them. No conceivable authority could lie in them. The character of the attempts to hinder the apostle are clearly seen in ver. 12: "And when we heard these things, both we [St. Paul's companions], and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem." Manifestly the apostle would have been altogether wrong if he had yielded to these kind friends, and resisted the inward monitions and leadings of God's Spirit. Oftentimes in Christian life we find that our most anxious work is to resist the importunities and affectionate entreaties of those who would keep us from the work to which God plainly calls us. Illustration: keeping men back from consecration to ministerial and missionary life.

IV. SUCH PERSUASIONS TESTED ST. PAUL'S LOYALTY TO THE SPIRIT'S INWARD LEADINGS. And this is the reason why the prophetic intimations of coming facts were given. How deeply the apostle felt both the prophecies and the persuasions is seen in ver. 13. Would he be drawn aside from the plain path of duty by them? They made it hard to be faithful to God's will as he knew it; but he did not yield. Well he knew that mere consequences resulting from action, as men see them, never can decide the right or the wrong of the action. A man must always act upon the light and lead which God gives him, and accept the issues which Divine providence is pleased to bring out of his conduct. A man is always right who is true to the witness that God makes in

his own heart. Show how much of Christian failure is really due to yielding under the temptations that would remove us from following out our convictions. So St. Peter tried to hinder his Lord and Master, and received this severe answer, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Distinguish, however, very clearly between mere self-willedness and the conviction of an inward Divine leading such as open and trusting hearts need never fail to recognize.

This example of the great apostle should impress upon us that, if we distinctly know what God would have us do, then no kind of peril of circumstances or fear of consequences may be permitted to lead us aside from the plain path of duty. We must ever be loyal to the "inward lead."—R. T.

Ver. 5.—*The influence of personal affection on Christian ministers.* The scene described here may be compared with that at Miletus (ch. xx. 26, 27). The impression that it was the last time they would see the great apostle among them intensified the expression of feeling, but it could hardly be said to increase the affection which the disciples cherished towards St. Paul. That strong personal attachment the apostle won wherever he went. Some men are remarkable for the power of drawing forth the affection and love of those whom they seek to serve for Christ's sake. Some men are never more or other than officials, valued and trusted only for "their work's sake." Others are beloved "for their own sakes," and the work they do is glorified by the beauty which, to men's eyes, they put upon it in the doing of it. Some think that personal affection for a pastor or a teacher is rather a hindrance to him, as the truth he teaches may come to be valued for his sake, and not for its own. Others urge that truth never really reaches them and sways them until it comes with the persuasions of one whom they wholly trust and whom they intensely love. Every true pastor will dread putting himself in any sense between souls and Christ; but every pastor will rejoice if, by winning the love of men, he can bring them to love Christ. Picturing the scene of our text, Canon Farrar says, "When the week was over St. Paul left them; and so deeply in that brief period had he won their affections, that all the members of the little community, with their wives and children, started with him to conduct him on his way. Before they reached the vessel, they knelt down side by side, men and women and little ones, somewhere on the surf-beat rocks near which the vessel was moored, to pray together—he for them, and they for him—before they returned to their homes; and he went once more on board for the last stage of the voyage from Tyre to Ptolemais, the modern Acre." We dwell on the following points:—

I. ST. PAUL'S POWER TO COMMAND AND TO WIN AFFECTION. This was a part of his natural gifts. It belonged to his disposition and character. But we may especially note two things: (1) he freely gave love to others, and only those who can love can win love; (2) he had a singular power of spiritual insight, and wherever that is found men have unusual charm to the view of others.

II. THE KIND OF FAREWELL BROUGHT OUT THE EXPRESSIONS OF AFFECTION. All farewells test friendship and love. This was peculiar, (1) as being a last farewell; (2) as taken immediately before anticipated scenes of sorrow and affliction. Compare our Lord's view of Mary's act, anointing his feet with nard. It was a preparatory anointing for burial, and so an unusual expression of love.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF SUCH MANIFESTED AFFECTION ON THE MINISTER HIMSELF. Especially (1) its power to constrain him to do his very best; (2) the gracious and tender tone which it puts on all his teaching and relations; (3) the adaptations it enables him to make of the truth to individuals, since love is the greatest revealer of men to their fellows; and (4) the hopefulness it leads him to cherish concerning those for whom he labours.

IV. THE INFLUENCE WHICH SUCH AFFECTION HAS ON THOSE WHO FEEL IT. Especially notice that it opens their hearts to receive instruction and counsel as nothing else can; and it constantly acts as an inspiring force, moving them to be worthy of those whom they love.

The minister's great appeal is to men's hearts. If he can win their love, he will not fail to instruct their minds and sway their wills.—R. T.

Ver. 13.—*St. Peter and St. Paul compared in boasting.* This strong declaration,



"I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus," sounds very much like the language of St. Peter to his Master. "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." And yet there is the most vital distinction between the spirit and tone and temper of the two sayings, and the difference comes fully out in the actions that followed. Self-trusting Peter failed in the testing hour. Christ-trusting Paul went on to win the martyr's crown. This is the subject before us; but in introducing it there should be some estimate of the blended strength and weakness of Peter's character before his fall. The boldness and forwardness were valuable qualities for one who was to be a leading gospel witness and missionary; but before the humbling experience of his fall, Peter's forwardness meant undue self-reliance. So our Lord had on one occasion to speak more sternly to him than to any other of his disciples, even saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan." There should be also a due estimate of the highly wrought condition of Paul's feeling when he uttered the seemingly boastful words of our text. "The intense sensitiveness of St. Paul's nature shows itself in every syllable. It was with no Stoic hardness that he resisted their entreaties. They were positively crushing to him. He adhered to his purpose, but it was as with a broken heart. In spite of this, however, his martyr-like, Luther-like nature carried him forward. Bonds and imprisonment!—these he had heard of when he was yet at Corinth and Ephesus, before he had started on his journey; but what were they to one who was ready to face death?" The comparison may take three forms.

I. ST. PETER'S BOASTING WAS THAT OF INEXPERIENCE. He talked about dying with Jesus, but he did not know what dying was. He had not suffered much in his discipleship. Persecutions nor shame had yet touched him. He talked about dying as we all do until God has taken us and set us down at the very edge of the border-land. Many of us feel very confident that we can master temptation, endure affliction, and face death; while the truth may be that we know nothing of the force or the subtlety of either, and may well be humble, and look on to untried scenes saying, "Lead thou me on."

II. ST. PAUL'S BOASTING WAS THAT OF EXPERIENCE. He had fully proved what he could do, and what he could bear, for Christ's sake. He had been sick and ill; he had faced death by shipwreck; he had been stoned by the mob, and left for dead. He was always bearing about in the body the "dying of the Lord Jesus." He might speak strongly and confidently; for there could be nothing in his coming lot that had not been represented in his past experiences. He knew well that he laboured day by day with his life, as it were, in his hands. There is all the difference between his words and St. Peter's that we find between the confident utterance of a youth and the calm expressions of the aged. And St. Paul's has really no boastfulness in it. It is but the fixed and settled purpose of his life pressed out into intense language.

III. ST. PETER'S BOASTING WAS THAT OF PASSIONATE FEELING. He did love the Master, and was sincere in expressing his love; but he did not *think* about his words before speaking, so they bear the character of the impulsive man that St. Peter was. Under excitement we may easily promise too much. Under self-restraint we shall find that what we *would* and what we *can* seriously differ from each other. When feeling is calmed, judgment will not always support what feeling has said.

IV. ST. PAUL'S BOASTING WAS THAT OF SETTLED CONVICTION. The result, not of resolve alone, but of resolve tested, renewed, and established. Sober, settled conviction breathes in that first chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians. It is quiet, calm writing. And it reads thus: "With all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." The same tone of settled conviction is on his glowing words so simply written in his letter to Timothy: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Such expressions can never be mistaken for boasting; they are only signs of a soul that is sublimely uplifted in the strength of its faith, and in the fulness of its experience.

V. ST. PETER'S BOASTING WAS THAT OF SELF-CONFIDENCE. This being the more familiar view taken of St. Peter's words, the mode of treating it may be left. The point to impress is that he spoke *relying on himself*, and with no question of his own

ability to carry out what he said. He that leaneth on himself leaneth on a reed that will too surely bend beneath his weight. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." And St. Peter's own Master thus solemnly warned both him and his fellow-disciples: "Without me ye can do nothing." Then and now, self-confidence is only vain confidence.

**VI. ST. PAUL'S BOASTING WAS THAT OF FULL SUBMISSION.** St. Peter thought of "dying with Christ" as something to *do*. St. Paul thought of it as something to *bear*. Christ did not ask St. Peter to die with him. He pushed himself into the place. Christ did ask St. Paul to suffer and to die for him, and the tender grace of his seeming boasting lies in its being his full acceptance of God's will for him, and his assurance that, however hard to flesh and blood, his will is love. St. Paul's spirit took his confidence altogether away from *self*, and made it rest altogether on Christ. St. Peter said, "I can do all things." St. Paul said, "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me." After his humiliation, St. Peter was converted to the better mind; and illustration of his humble and trustful spirit may be taken from his Epistles. Especially notice 1 Pet. v. 6, 7, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."—R. T.

**Ver. 16.—Old disciples.** There must have been some peculiarity in the case of Mnason for St. Luke to remark that he was an "old disciple," which may mean that he was an "old man and a disciple," or that he was one of the earliest disciples, possibly one who was led to accept Christ as the Messiah on the day of Pentecost. He was a "man of Cyprus," but he may have been visiting Jerusalem at Pentecost. Mention is made of him in connection with St. Paul's journey to explain the care which the Christian disciples took to secure the apostle's safety and comfort in the holy city. The crowd at the feast-times was so immense that the ordinary stranger might fail to find accommodation. Mnason had a house at Jerusalem, and there St. Paul was sheltered. There are two senses in which a man may be spoken of as an "old disciple:" (1) he may be old in years; (2) he may be old in experience. No Christian disciple could at that time have been very old in experience of Christian life. There are four possible suppositions concerning the discipleship of Mnason. (1) He may have been, like Simeon, one of those who looked for redemption in Israel, and so was prepared at once to welcome Christ. (2) He may have been one of the disciples who attached themselves to Christ while he was with men in the flesh. (3) He may have been converted at the day of Pentecost. (4) He may have been a firstfruit of St. Paul's missionary labours in Cyprus. The subject suggested by the reference to Mnason is—the *mission in the Church of old disciples*; and three points may receive full treatment and illustration.

**I.** Old disciples may prove what Divine grace can do in keeping us unspotted from the world.

**II.** Old disciples may illustrate "patient continuance in well-doing."

**III.** Old disciples may exert a gracious influence by the tone and character of their religious experience, as corrective of the mistakes and practical errors that may prevail, and as guiding to the solution of practical difficulties in doctrine and in conduct. The Church has often good reason to rejoice in the wisdom and prudence of her "old disciples."—R. T.

**Vers. 20—25.—The perils of over-caution.** For the details of these verses, reference must be made to the exegetical portion of this Commentary. We should fully understand: 1. The intense enmity of the Judaizing party against St. Paul. 2. The opportunity of increasing that enmity found in the fact that many of St. Paul's enemies from Asia and Europe were present in Jerusalem at this time, attending the feast. 3. The difficulty of the Christian leaders, who had not openly broken with rabbinical Mosaism, and consequently found St. Paul's presence in the city a source of extreme anxiety. They could not openly condemn him; and indeed this they were not prepared to do. They could not openly approve him, for this would be sure to rouse dissension, and it would certainly put St. Paul's life in peril. 4. The spirit and temper of the apostle himself, who was rather bold than cautious, and had on several important occasions (as, e.g. ch. xix. 30, 31) to be actually held back from courses of action that were

hardly prudent. The leaders of the Church at Jerusalem tried to master the difficulties of the position by *compromise*, which is usually a sign of conscious weakness, and often rather makes than settles the difficulty with which it deals. "The heads of the Church in Jerusalem dreaded nothing but an uproar, if St. Paul's presence in the city should become known. In order, therefore, to appease the multitude, they proposed to the apostle to observe the sacred usages publicly in the temple, with four men who were paying their vows, and to present an offering for himself—a proposal which he willingly adopted. But although the concession of the apostles to the weak brethren proceeded from a good intention, yet it turned out disastrously. The furious enemies of St. Paul were only the more exasperated by it" (Olshausen). It was a case of "over-caution," and it well illustrates the weakness and the peril that usually lie in over-cautious schemes.

I. THE PLACE FOR COMPROMISE. Which is the practical expression of extreme caution, and the constant resort of cautious dispositions. It is useful: 1. When the matter in dispute cannot have a full and final adjustment. 2. When such serious interests are at stake that it is important not to keep open the dispute. 3. When both parties have a measure of right on their sides, and the claim of each must be moderated to admit the right of the others. 4. When the intense feeling of the disputants prevents the acceptance of any positive settlement. These may be illustrated both from worldly and from Christian spheres.

II. THE PERILS OF COMPROMISE. They arise from the fact that, as a rule, 1. Compromise settles nothing, but really leaves the old difficulty to find a new expression. 2. It keeps in relation parties who would be much better apart. 3. It gives those who are in the wrong, an impression of weakness in those who suggest the compromise, and so encourages them in the wrong and leads them to take advantage of the weakness; as is illustrated in the case before us of the Judaizing party.

III. THE PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A FIRM STAND UPON WHAT IS RIGHT. Nothing disarms opposition as this does, and nothing settles disputes as a firm and wise decision. If the apostolic council had simply and firmly accepted St. Paul, given their public testimony to their confidence in him, and explained the relation in which the Gentile Churches and their teacher stood to the Jewish Churches and their teachers, mistakes would have been corrected, opposition would have been checked, and St. Paul's enemies would have failed to make a party. All the calamities that followed, though foreordained of God, are, on their human side, traceable to the over-caution and weak compromise of the Jerusalem apostles. Learn the value of prudence and caution in the practical concerns of life, but learn also the perils of the exaggeration of caution, and the adoption of compromises when we have before us questions of right and wrong. Right is right, and we must stand to it whatever may be the peril.—R. T.

Vers. 27—30.—*Party prejudices.* Explain the points of view of the Judaizing party. Zeal for the purity of Mosaism can be commended. The binding character of Mosaic Law on all born Jews may be recognized. We cannot wonder that many of the Jews should regard Christianity as a reform of Judaism, rather than what such men as St. Paul saw it to be—the completion and perfection of Judaism. Regarding it as reformed Judaism, they would plead that its claims rested on all Gentiles who became Christian Jews. The first indications of the existence of this Judaizing party within the Christian community we find in ch. xv. 1. Then the matter occasioned so much dispute that the advice of the apostolic council had to be sought. Their judgment was virtually against the Judaizing party, and this intensified their opposition, made them cling even more closely to their party prejudices, and led them to regard St. Paul more distinctly as the leader of the more liberal views which they hated. They followed the apostle everywhere; they tried to undermine his influence and destroy his work; and it even seems that they resolved not to rest until they had secured his death. They are striking examples of the worst phases of the sectarian spirit, which blinds to truth, hardens from conviction, destroys a man's tenderness, and makes cruelty and crime possible to him. Scarcely any evil force has exerted in history so baneful an influence as that of the party spirit. It was an ideal time which the poetical historian describes, "when none was for a party, but all were for the state." Still the sectarian and party spirit is the gravest trouble afflicting Christ's Church, and the most serious



hindrance to the perfecting of Christ's kingdom. But we need to make a careful distinction between party *spirit* and party *action*. Sectional action may be an important element in working. More can be accomplished by sections devoting their attention to parts. But party spirit, which means jealous feeling separating the sections, is always bad, for those who feel the jealousy and for those who suffer from its schemes. Taking illustration from what is narrated of these Judaizing teachers, we notice that party prejudice—

I. **BLINDS TO FACT AND TRUTH.** If the party has a piece of truth, it is but a piece, and yet it often prevents the apprehension of any other related or higher truth. And even worse is its power to distort or deny facts. The party man will see or admit nothing that does not tell for his party. Show that St. Paul had facts and truths, but these opponents would give him no calm consideration. They really shouted him down, as did the excited Ephesians, who cried all day, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." If we find an unwillingness to admit facts or to calmly consider phases of truth presented for our consideration, then we may gravely fear lest we be giving place to party prejudices.

II. **INVOLVES INJUSTICE.** In dealing with individuals. For the partisan associates the *holder* of an objectionable theory with the theory, and is easily led to vent his annoyance at the theory upon the holder and propounder of it. The sectional and party spirit is at the root of all religious persecution. Men are not unjust when they contend for God's truth, but only when they contend for some *ism* of their own, which they persuade themselves is God's truth. Christ says to all who think of using external forces for him, "Put up thy sword into its sheath."

III. **PARTY PREJUDICES ARE MOST DIFFICULT TO REMOVE.** Seen in the difficulty of correcting the mistakes on which sects now divide from each other. The "common ground" is little regarded, and the points of difference are unduly exaggerated, and men stand to their little peculiarities and special points as if the whole gospel gathered up into their side and piece of doctrine. And if any try to free them from their prejudice, and let in on them a little generous light, they only retire further in and hold their party sentiment tighter than ever. Surely the full warning of these Judaizers in St. Paul's time has not been sufficiently recognized in these days of a divided Church and unduly magnified theological and ecclesiastical differences.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1.—*Brethren for men, brethren, A.V.* (ch. vii. 2, note); *the for my, A.V.; now make for make now, A.V.* The defence; *ἀπολογία*. This is the technical word in classical Greek for a defence in answer to an accusation. Thus e.g. the oration of Gorgias entitled, *Ἐπὶ Παλαμήδους ἀπολογία*, begins, *Ἡ μὲν κατηγορία καὶ ἡ ἀπολογία κρίσις οὐ περὶ θανάτου γίγνεται*. And Demosthenes opposes *κατηγορεῖν*, to accuse, to *ἀπολογεῖσθαι*, to make one's defence. And an *ἀπολογία δίκαια καὶ ἀπλή* is to prove that *τὰ κατηγορημένα*, "the things of which the person is accused," were never done. But it is probably from St. Paul's use of the word here that it became common to call the defences of the Christian religion by the term *ἀπολογία*. Thus we have the 'Apologies' of Justin Martyr, of Tertullian, of Minutius Felix, among the ancients; the 'Apologia Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ,' by Bishop Jewel, and many others.

Ver. 2.—*Unto them in the Hebrew language for in the Hebrew tongue to them, A.V.; were*

*the more quiet for kept the more silence, A.V.* When they heard, etc. This trait is wonderfully true to nature, and exhibits also St. Paul's admirable tact and self-possession. It was strikingly in harmony with his addressing them as "brethren" that he should speak to them in their own mother tongue. There is a living reality in such touches which seems at once to refute Renan's suspicion that St. Luke invented this and other of St. Paul's speeches in the later chapters of the Acts. The full report of these later speeches is abundantly accounted for by the fact that through this time St. Luke was with St. Paul, and heard the speeches.

Ver. 3.—*A Jew for verily a man which am a Jew, A.V. and T.R.; of Cilicia for a city in Cilicia, A.V.; but for yet, A.V.; instructed for and taught, A.V.; strict for perfect, A.V.; our for the, A.V.; being for and was, A.V.; for for towards, A.V.; even as for as, A.V.* Born in Tarsus, etc. (see ch. xxi. 39). St. Paul was evidently proud of his native city, "the famous capital of a Roman province," watered by the "swift stream of the Cydnus,"

and looked down upon by the snowy summits of Mount Taurus; "a centre of busy commercial enterprise and political power;" "a free city, *libera et immunitas*" (Farrar, 'Life of St. Paul,' vol. i. ch. ii.). St. Paul's express assertion that he was "born at Tarsus" directly refutes the tradition handed down by St. Jerome that he was born at Giscala, and carried thence to Tarsus by his parents when Giscala was taken by the Romans (Farrar, *ibid.*). Brought up; ἀνατετραμμένος, a classical word, only found in the New Testament in the Acts (ch. vii. 20, 21, and here). It is found also in Wisd. vii. 4. It implies early education. At the feet of. The scholar sits or stands humbly beneath the raised seat of the teacher (comp. Luke x. 39). The stop is rightly placed after Γαμαλιήλ. Some, however, put the stop after ταύτην, and connect παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ with πεπαιδευμένος. Gamaliel (see ch. 4, v. 3, note). Instructed according to the strict manner of the Law of our fathers; comp. Gal. i. 14, "I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers," where for τοῦ πατρῶου νόμου we read τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων. Under the πατρός νόμος Paul probably included the traditions, as well as the written Law, which the Pharisees so rigidly observed (comp. ch. xxvi. 5, where the ἀκριβεστάτην αἰρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας corresponds with the ἀκριβείαν τοῦ πατρῶου νόμου). The strict manner; κατὰ ἀκριβείαν, found only here in the New Testament; but a word of repeated use in this sense in Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom, and also, with the adjective ἀκριβῆς and the adverb ἀκριβῶς, much used by medical writers. 'Ακριβέστερος and ἀκριβέστατος are used by St. Luke only (ch. xviii. 26; xxiii. 15, 20; xxiv. 22; xxvi. 5), and ἀκριβῶς six times to three in the rest of the New Testament. Zealous for God (ζηλωτὴς τοῦ Θεοῦ); see ch. xxi. 20, note.

Ver. 4.—I persecuted (see 1 Cor. xv. 9; 1 Tim. i. 13; and ch. xxvi. 11). This Way (see ch. ix. 2; xviii. 25; xix. 9, 23). Unto the death (comp. ch. ix. 1). Binding, etc. (comp. ch. viii. 3; ix. 2).

Ver. 5.—Journeyed for went, A.V.; *them also for them*, A.V.; *unto Jerusalem in bonds for bound unto Jerusalem*, A.V. The high priest. Ananias, the present high priest, who may have been one of St. Paul's hearers included among the "fathers," and who had probably been already a member of the Sanhedrim at the time of St. Paul's conversion (see ch. xxiii. 2; xxiv. 1). Others, however, understand "the high priest" to mean him who was high priest at the time of St. Paul's journey to Damascus, viz. Theophilus, who was still alive. The brethren. The Jews at Damascus. St. Paul speaks to

his hearers emphatically as a Jew. To be punished (ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν); whether by rods or by death. The word occurs in the New Testament only here and ch. xxvi. 11, but is not unfrequent in the LXX. and in classical writers; τιμωρεῖν is common in medical language in the sense of "to treat medically," to "correct" by medical treatment.

Ver. 6.—*Drew nigh for was come nigh*, A.V. The phraseology of the following narrative is nearly identical with that of ch. ix. 3—6 (where see notes).

Ver. 9.—*Beheld for saw*, A.V. Beheld indeed the light [and were afraid, A.V.]. This corresponds with the statement in ch. ix. 7, that the men who journeyed with Saul "stood speechless." They were dazzled and amazed at the sudden brightness. But they heard not the voice. This at first sight seems inconsistent with the statement in ch. ix. 7, "hearing the voice." But the apparent inconsistency disappears when we observe that here St. Paul wished to impress upon his hearers that, though his companions had seen the light, they had not heard the words which were addressed to him by the Lord Jesus (see ver. 14); whereas St. Luke, in the narrative in ch. ix., wished rather to insist upon the fact that though the men had seen the light and heard the sound of the voice, they had not seen Jesus. To see and hear the risen Christ was a privilege given to St. Paul alone.

Ver. 11.—*When I could not see* (comp. ch. ix. 8, and note). Them that were with me (τῶν συνόντων μοι). Συνεῖναι occurs only here and Luke ix. 18, but is used several times by the LXX. It is very common in medical writers for the accompanying symptoms of a disease.

Ver. 12.—*Well reported of by for having a good report of*, A.V.; *that for which*, A.V. Well reported of (μαρτυρούμενος); see ch. vi. 8, note.

Ver. 13.—*Standing by me for stood, and*, A.V.; *in that very for the same*, A.V.; *on for upon*, A.V.

Ver. 14.—*Appointed for chosen*, A.V.; *to know for that thou shouldst know*, A.V.; *to see the Righteous One for see that Just One*, A.V.; *to hear a voice from for shouldst hear the voice of*, A.V. Hath appointed thee; προεχειρίσασθαι σε, a word found in the New Testament only here and in ch. xxvi. 16, and in ch. iii. 20 (R.T.). In classical Greek it means mostly "to get anything ready beforehand;" to cause anything to be πρόχειρος, ready to hand. And in the LXX. it means "to choose," or "appoint," as Josh. iii. 12; Exod. iv. 13, where it is not a translation of רָאָה, but a paraphrase of the sentence, "Appoint one by whom

thou wilt send." Here it may be rendered indifferently either "choose" or "appoint." **The Righteous One.** The designation of Messiah in such passages as Isa. liii. 11; Ps. lxxii. 2, etc. (see in the New Testament Luke xxiii. 47; 1 John ii. 1; Rev. xix. 11, etc.). A voice from his mouth is a very awkward though literal rendering. The A.V. expresses the sense much better.

**Ver. 15.—A witness for him for his witness, A.V.** A witness. An essential attribute of an apostle (see ch. i. 8, 22, notes). Seen and heard (comp. 1 John i. 1—3).

**Ver. 16.—His Name for the Name of the Lord, A.V. and T.R.** Wash away thy sins; ἀπολούσαι, only here and in 1 Cor. vi. 11, where it is found in exactly the same sense of "washing away sins" (see vers. 9, 10) in holy baptism. Hence the λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσίας, "the washing of regeneration" (Titus iii. 5; comp. Eph. v. 26; and see ch. ii. 38, note). Calling on his Name (ἐπικαλεσάμενος); see ch. ii. 21; vii. 59, note; ix. 14; 1 Cor. x. 12, 13, 14; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 22; 1 Pet. i. 17,—all texts distinctly justifying prayer to the Lord Jesus.

**Ver. 17.—Had returned for was come again, A.V.; and for even, A.V.; fell into for was in, A.V.** Into a trance (ἐν ἐκστάσει); see ch. x. 10, note.

**Ver. 18.—Because for for, A.V.; of thee testimony for thy testimony, A.V. and T.R.** Get thee quickly, etc. The narrative in ch. ix. 28—30 does not mention the vision, but gives the murderous opposition of the Hellenist Jews as the reason of Saul's departure from Jerusalem to Tarsus. Possibly, if it had not been for the Divine warning, the apostle would have braved the danger and lost his life.

**Ver. 19.—They themselves for they, A.V.** In every synagogue. It appears from Matt. x. 18 that offenders were beaten in the synagogue, and doubtless by command of the synagogue authorities. A delation to any synagogue that any member of it was a blasphemer (i.e. a Christian) would lead to such a punishment. But probably the meaning here rather is that he went or sent to every synagogue to find out who there was among them that believed in Jesus, and then had them punished at Jerusalem (ch. ix. 2).

**Ver. 20.—Stephen thy witness for thy martyr Stephen, A.V.; consenting for consenting unto his death, A.V. and T.R.; keeping the garments for kept the raiment, A.V.** Consenting; συνευδοκῶν (above, ch. viii. 1; Luke xi. 48; Rom. i. 32; 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13). It is also found in 1 Macc. i. 60; 2 Macc. xi. 34, 35. Of them that slew him (τῶν ἀναγοῦντων αὐτόν). Ἀναίρειν, in the sense of "to kill," is a favourite word of

St. Luke's (Luke xxii. 2; xxiii. 32; ch. ii. 23; v. 33, 36; vii. 28; ix. 23, 24, 29; x. 39; xii. 2; xiii. 28; xvi. 27; xxii. 20; xxiii. 15, 21, 27; xxv. 3; xxvi. 10); but elsewhere in the New Testament only Matt. ii. 16 and 2 Thess. ii. 8, i.e. T. It is frequent in the LXX. and also in medical writers in the sense of "taking away" or "removing."

**Ver. 21.—Send thee forth for send thee, A.V.** The natural understanding of the preceding dialogue is that Saul, when bid depart quickly out of Jerusalem because the Jews would not receive his testimony, was unwilling to obey, and pleaded that surely the Jews must listen to him and be convinced, since they were well aware how hot and zealous a partizan of the Jews he had been, and must see that nothing but a great miracle could have converted him. It was the argument of a young and impetuous man, with little experience of the headstrong obstinacy of bigoted men. The Lord cut him short with a peremptory "Depart!" but with the gracious addition, "I will send thee unto the Gentiles"—a commission which is more fully given in ch. xxvi. 17, 18, and which was carried out in his whole life.

**Ver. 22.—They for then, A.V.; voice for voices, A.V.** Unto this word. They could not bear the idea of the Gentiles being admitted into the kingdom of God. It was a blow to their pride of exclusiveness. The levelling-up of the Gentiles seemed to be as intolerable as the levelling-down of themselves, as spoken of e.g. Isa. i. 10; Ezek. xvi. 45, etc.

**Ver. 23.—Threw off their garments for cast off their clothes, A.V.; cast for threw, A.V.** Threw off their garments. Either "wild signs of fury, gestures by which they gave to understand that they would gladly accomplish the cry, 'Away with him from the earth!'" (Lange), tokens of applause and consent at the sentiment of the cry (see the passages quoted by Kuinoel, τὴν ἐσθῆτα ἀνασείων . . . ἐκρῶται τὸν Προαιρέσιον, "The proconsul applauded Proairesius the rhetorician by shaking his purple robe," Eunapius, 'Life of the Emperor Julian'; "The whole theatre raved together, and leaped, and shouted, and threw off their garments (τὰς ἐσθῆτας ἀπεβύπτον),” Lucian, 'De Salt,'); or (so Meyer) signifying that they were ready to stone the culprit (see ver. 20).

**Ver. 24.—Bidding for and bade, A.V.; for what cause for wherefore, A.V.; so shouted for cried so, A.V.** The chief captain (see ch. xxi. 31, note). The castle (see ch. xxi. 34, note). Examined; ἀνέτακτον, only here and in ver. 29. In Judg. vi. 29 (Codex Alexandrinus) and in the Hist. of



Susanna 14 the verb has the simple sense of "inquiring." The classical word for "examining" and especially by torture, is *ἐξετάζειν*. By scourging (*μάστιγι*). The *μάστιγι* was in Latin the *flagellum*, the most severe implement of flogging, though even with the lighter *virga*, the rod of the lictor, slaves and others were beaten to death (*usque ad necem*). It was not lawful to beat a Roman citizen even with the *virga* (*βάβδος*); ch. xvi. 22, 35, 37, notes. The *μάστιγι*, or scourge, was that with which our Lord was scourged at the bidding of Pilate (Matt. xxvii. 26, where *πραγελλώσας* is from the Latin *flagellum*; Mark x. 34; Luke xviii. 33; John xix. 1). Doubtless Lysias had not understood Paul's Hebrew speech, and so had not known what it was which provoked so fierce an uproar among the people.

Ver. 25.—*When they had tied him up with the thongs for as they bound him with thongs*, A.V. When they had tied him up, etc. This does not seem to be a right rendering. *Προτείνω* can only mean "to stretch out before," or "expose to the action," of anything, when taken in a literal sense; *ίμάς*, again, more naturally means the "thong" or "lash" of a whip or scourge than a thong to bind a man with; indeed, it is thought to be etymologically connected with *μάστιγι*. Meyer, therefore, rightly understands the passage to mean when they had stretched him on the stake ready to receive the scourging. Is it lawful, etc.? Paul now pleads his privileges as a Roman citizen, just in time to stop the outrage, remembering, no doubt, the terror inspired in the Philippian magistrates when they found they had beaten with rods an uncondemned Roman citizen (see ch. xvi. 38). Uncondemned (*ἀκατακρίτους*); ch. xvi. 37. Only found in these two passages in the New Testament, and nowhere else.

Ver. 26.—*And when for when*, A.V.; *it*

for that, A.V.; to for and told, A.V.; and told him, saying for saying, A.V.; What art thou about to do? for Take heed what-thou doest, A.V.

Ver. 27.—*And for then*, A.V.; and he said for he said, A.V.

Ver. 28.—*Citizenship for freedom*, A.V.; *am a Roman for was free*, A.V. A great sum (*πολλοῦ κεφαλαίου*). The word is only found here in the New Testament in the sense of a "sum of money," but is so used in classical writers. Citizenship; *πολιτεία*, for "freedom of the city," in Xenophon, Ælian, Polybius, Dion Cassius, etc., and 3 Macc. iii. 21. Dion Cassius (lx. 17) relates that Messalina, the wife of the Emperor Claudius, used to sell the freedom of the city, and that at first she sold it (*μεγάλων χρημάτων*) for a very high price, but that afterwards it became very cheap. In all probability Lysias had so purchased it, and in consequence took the name of Claudius (Renan, 'St. Paul,' p. 524). I am a Roman born. It is not known how St. Paul's family acquired the Roman citizenship.

Ver. 29.—*They then which were about to examine him straightway departed from him for then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him*, A.V.; *when for after*, A.V. Had bound him (*ἔν αὐτὸν δεδεκώς*), as related in ch. xxi. 33. *Ἐκέλευσε δεθῆναι*: "Facinus est vinciri civem Romanum," Cicero, in 'Verrem,' v. 66 (quoted by Meyer).

Ver. 30.—*But on for on*, A.V.; *desiring to know for because he would have known*, A.V.; *loosed him for loosed him from his bands*, A.V. and T.R.; *the council for their council*, A.V. and T.R.; *to come together for to appear*, A.V. and T.R. Brought Paul down; from the castle to the council-room below, either to the hall Gazith or to some other place of meeting. Lysias probably still kept Paul a prisoner through the night, on account of the excited state of the people.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—30.—*The apology*. It was a very remarkable promise which our Lord made to his apostles, when, forewarning them that they should be delivered up to councils, and brought before kings and rulers for his sake, he added, "But when they so deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark xiii. 9—11). It is impossible not to see a fulfilment of this promise in St. Paul's apology delivered from the castle stairs at Jerusalem to an infuriated and bloodthirsty mob. A Jewish riot had something terrific in it, something dreaded even by the iron-minded Romans. The features all contorted with passion, the large eyes starting out of their sockets, the savage grinding of the teeth, the fierce cries, the wild throwing of handfuls of dust into the air, the tossing and waving of their garments with an unbridled violence, gave a demoniac aspect to such rioters (Renan, p. 524). Paul had just come out of the thick of such a mob. He had

barely escaped with his life, but not without many blows. He had heard his name given to execration, held up to detestation as the author of blasphemies and sacrilege, and as the enemy of his race. And now he was a prisoner in the hands of the heathen masters of his unhappy country. His hands were loaded with chains, and he knew not what dangers were before him. And yet, when he had scarce recovered breath after the struggle for life, we find him with the chains on his wrists, but with unruffled spirit, and admirable composure and self-possession, delivering to his enemies and would-be murderers a speech as gentle, as firm, as calm, as collected, and as logical, as if he had composed and prepared it at leisure in the stillness of his own study, and was addressing it to a congregation of friends and admirers. Must it not have been given to him in that hour what to speak, and how to say it? The great force of this defence lay in its simple statement of facts. The apostle's conduct at each successive stage had flowed naturally and almost inevitably from the circumstances which surrounded him. He had nothing to conceal. Indeed, the circumstances of his early life were well known to his hearers. If his statement was true, how could he have acted differently? He appealed to his fellow-countrymen, his fathers and brothers of the Jewish people, to hear with impartiality the apology which he made. Had he stopped here, maybe his defence would have been accepted. His Hebrew speech, his thoroughly Jewish attitude, his high-minded earnestness, his splendid courage, seem to have wrought to some extent upon his volatile and mobile hearers. But he could not stop there. He had a further message to deliver, and it must be delivered at Jerusalem, the mother Church, not only of the circumcision, but of the whole Gentile world. That message was that Christ was to be preached to the Gentiles, and that Jews and Gentiles were to be henceforth one in Christ. And that message he delivered with chains on his arms, from the midst of a Roman cohort, to the angry crowd beneath him, having obviously one single purpose—to speak the truth, and to do his duty both to God and man. One other remark is called for by this apology. The nature of the case, a *defence* under false accusation, made it absolutely necessary that the defendant should speak of himself. But in the course of the twenty verses in which he details the several passages in the history of his life which bore upon the accusation, it is impossible to detect one particle of vain-glory or of egotism. There are no boastings, nor are there any expressions of an affected humility. There is absolute simplicity. He speaks of himself because he must. And in the same spirit of genuine humility, when it was not necessary, he did not speak of himself. In the remarkable absence of details in all those parts of the Acts of the Apostles where St. Luke does not write as an eye-witness, we have strong evidence that St. Paul did not make his own doings the subject of his conversation with his familiar friends. Had he done so, St. Luke's narrative might have been richer and fuller, but St. Paul's greatness would have been diminished, as that of all vain men is, by the desire to appear great. As it is, the apology enables us to enumerate the great apostle's virtues as combining in an extraordinary degree, courage, gentleness, calmness, vigour, humility, high-mindedness, determination, honesty, truth, patriotism, self-forgetfulness, wisdom, eloquence, and a passionate zeal for the glory of Christ and for the salvation of men. (For an illustration of some of these features in the apostle's character, see also 2 Cor. xi. ; xii. ; Gal. ii. 5, 11 ; Eph. iii. 7, 8 ; 1 Tim. i. 12, 13, 16 ; and throughout the Acts of the Apostles.)

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—22.—Argument and prejudice.** We have here—

**I. AN ADMIRABLE ARGUMENT.** Paul, at the inspiration of the moment, made a powerful defence of his position. He showed: 1. That no one could enter into their feelings more perfectly than himself. Was he not a Jew by birth (ver. 3)? Had he not received a thoroughly Jewish education, at the feet of a Jewish master (ver. 3)? Had he not been absolutely possessed by a devotedness to the Law, and a corresponding hatred of the new "Way" (ver. 4)? Had they not the evidence in their own hands of the bitter and unrelenting persecution of which he had been the eager and active agent (ver. 5)? If, then, he was found advocating this hated "Way," it was not because he did not understand Jewish sympathies, nor because he had always been one of its votaries;

quite the contrary. 2. That no one could possibly have weightier reasons for changing his mind than he had. First came a heavenly vision, arresting him in his path of persecution, and forbidding him to continue (vers. 6—11). Then came a powerful confirmation, in a miracle of healing of which he himself was the subject and of which a most honourable and estimable Jew was the instrument (vers. 12, 13); and a further confirmation in the message with which he was charged (vers. 14—16). Then came a third influence of a powerful character in the shape of another manifestation, and a command, against which he vainly strove, to go out and work among the Gentiles (vers. 18—21).

II. A SENSELESS AND SUICIDAL EXASPERATION. (Vers. 22, 23.) Such was the violent antipathy in the minds of his audience to any fellowship with the Gentile world, that all Paul's arguments went for nothing. This was such an opportunity as was little likely to recur, of having the facts of the case placed plainly and forcibly before their minds; it was a day of grace to them. But so utterly prejudiced were they that one word filled them with a senseless exasperation which stole from them the golden chance they had of learning the truth, and which riveted the chains of error and exclusiveness they wore upon their souls.

This defence of the apostle and this exasperation of his audience may suggest to us: 1. *The fulness of the Divine argument.* God "reasons with" us. He does so (1) in proof of his own presence and providence in the world; (2) in proof of the heavenly origin of the gospel of his grace; and (3) in furtherance of our personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of our soul. The Divine arguments and inducements are very strong, and they are very varied. They include the miraculous and the ordinary; they appeal to the human consciousness, to history, and to daily observation; they are based on well-attested facts; they appeal to our hopes and to our fears, to our sense of what is due to our Creator and of what we owe to ourselves, of obligation and of wisdom. They are mighty, urgent, convincing, one would say—but for sad facts which argue to the contrary—overwhelming. 2. *The foolish and fatal anger which it sometimes excites.* There are those who, when God speaks to them in nature, providence, or privilege, instead of lending their ear to his word and bowing their spirit to his will, are only angered and exasperated; they go still further away from him in increased alienation, in still more determined rebelliousness of soul. But so doing (1) they aggravate their guilt; and (2) they cut down the bridge by which they might cross to the heavenly kingdom.—C.

Vers. 14, 15.—"*The will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.*" I. DIVINE ELECTION. "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee" (ver. 14). It will always be a difficulty to know what to think of the electing grace of God. But we are on safe ground when we say: 1. That God desires the well-being of every member of his human family. We may surely argue that it *must be* so; we may boldly affirm that it *is* so. Is it not written that God is one "who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4; see Ezek. xviii. 23; xxxiii. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 9). 2. That he bestows special favours and privileges on some men; to some as not to others he gives intellectual faculty, material resources, educational advantages, domestic influences, providential guidance, knowledge of Christian truth in its purity and integrity, etc. These he "elects," or "chooses;" on them he confers distinguishing goodness.

II. A VISION OF THE RIGHTEOUS SAVIOUR. "That thou shouldest . . . see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth" (ver. 14). To Saul there was vouchsafed a very special and peculiar manifestation of the risen Lord. In such wise as we do not, he saw the Just One himself and heard his voice. But Christ does present himself now to the sons of men, and he manifests himself as the Just One, as the Lord of righteousness. By a spiritual act we recognize Jesus Christ as: 1. That Being who is in himself the Holy and Righteous One, in whom is no trace of sin. 2. That Divine One who summons us to a new life of holiness and sacred service. 3. That Just One who, by his atoning death, has made the way open to our immediate justification, who has made it possible for us to attain to "the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 9). In the presence of him, the Just One, we are filled with shame; but by faith in his finished work we have acceptance with God and are accounted righteous (or,



just) in his sight; and we yield ourselves to him and his service that his righteousness may be reproduced in us and in our human lives. Thus we come to do—

III. **THAT WORK OF MAN WHICH IS THE WILL OF GOD.** Paul was to “know his will” (ver. 14), and was to do that will by the accomplishment of his life-work, viz. by “being his witness unto all men.” This, too, in our way and measure is to be our life-work, even as it was our Lord’s (John xviii. 37). We are to bear witness of Christian truth by (1) exemplary behaviour; (2) a devout and generous spirit; (3) the word of testimony and exhortation,—this latter is to be *experimental*, such as is suggested by our own actual experience. Every Christian life is a failure if it be not an epistle read and known of all who are there to read it.—C.

**Vers. 23—30.—The earthly and the heavenly citizenship.** The most interesting and the most distinctively Christian truth contained in this passage is that which we gain by contrasting the citizenship of ancient Rome with that of the kingdom of Christ. But we may also let these verses remind us of—

I. **THE INHUMANITY OF HEATHENISM.** “The chief captain . . . bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know,” etc. (ver. 24). What an inhuman and brutal procedure to extract evidence or confession by scourging—by cruel, relentless laceration of the body! It is painful to think how, in this as in many another respect, departure from God meant distance from all justice and benignity. It is, indeed, all too true that pagan law passed on many of its usages to Christian legislature, and that down to even recent times harsh and stern things have dishonoured the statute-books of Christian lands; but these have been (1) diametrically opposed to the spirit of Jesus Christ, (2) implicitly condemned by his words, and (3) have been (or are being) disowned and disestablished by his followers.

II. **THE EXCELLENCY OF HUMAN LAW AND DISCIPLINE.** Utterly defective as Roman law was, it shone in brilliant contrast with Jewish frenzy. How pitiable, not to say contemptible, the crowd crying out, rending their clothes, flinging dust in the air, in their uncontrollable passion (ver. 23)! Excellent, indeed, as compared with this, the safe custody of the Roman soldiery (ver. 24), the immediate regard paid to his claim of citizenship (vers. 26—29), the determination of the chief captain to bring Paul before the council in a legitimate and orderly way (ver. 30). With all defects and severities, law and discipline are immeasurably superior to the violent excitements of an incensate and ungovernable mob.

III. **THE RECTITUDE OF CLAIMING INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS.** The man who is perpetually asserting his rights is a man as far, in spirit, from the likeness of Jesus Christ as he is far, in fact, from the enjoyment of the esteem of man. God blesses him as little as man loves him. But obviously there are times when it is not only our right but our duty to assert our claims. Paul did so here (ver. 25), and most justifiably; there was no reason why he should suffer and be weakened by suffering when he could escape by making a lawful claim. We do well to be self-assertive so long as we do not acquire the spirit of selfishness and do not give the impression of being self-centred. We do well, when we act thus with a distinct view to the benefit of others, to our own spiritual well-being, or to the extension of the kingdom of Christ.

IV. **THE EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.** (Vers. 27, 28.) Paul acceded to the citizenship in virtue of his birth; he was free born. The chief captain obtained it by purchase. Others gained it by valuable military or civil service, or by favour of some illustrious man. Entrance into the kingdom of God cannot be gained thus. (1) Not by birth (John i. 13), (2) nor by purchase (ch. viii. 20), (3) nor by the favour of man (John i. 13), (4) nor by meritorious behaviour (Eph. ii. 9), do we become citizens of the spiritual kingdom and heirs of eternal life. It is rather by the influence of the Spirit of God upon and within us (John iii. 5), and by our appropriate and corresponding action in response—by penitence of spirit and humble faith in a Divine Saviour (ch. xx. 21), that we become true subjects of the great King, and have our names entered on that blessed roll which is the Book of Life.—C.

**Vers. 1—21.—Paul’s self-defence before the Jews.** “Brothers and fathers!” These words fell from his lips in the Hebrew tongue, and a hush fell upon them. If we desire to be listened to with attention, we must speak to the people “in their own tongue.”

**I. THE PERIOD BEFORE CONVERSION.** (Vers. 3—5.) He speaks throughout of himself; but in the background of his thought is the providence and the grace of Him who had called him out from darkness into his marvellous light. He was a Jew, strictly educated in the Law, and a zealot for God. And yet a persecutor. A lesson for us all against the over-valuation of learning and of orthodoxy. He had tried the way of zealotry and persecution, as Luther had tried that of monkery, sincerely seeking salvation, but without success. The memory of his earlier time is one mingled with thankfulness and penitence, as indeed all our memories must be. In his good education and in his unhappy errors he could trace the hand of God. Boasting is in every case excluded.

**II. HIS CONVERSION.** (Vers. 6—15.) 1. The great light from heaven on the way to Damascus. It disclosed the dark ways of sin and error in which the heart had been wandering; and at the same time lighted up the ways of Divine grace by which the convinced soul was to be led, and the path of duty the new-born soul was to follow. He is led by the hand, as into a mystery, which only the Divine wisdom shall gradually unfold. Jesus, still lead on! Like led children ever we enter the kingdom of heaven. 2. The ordination by the hands of Ananias. A pious man according to the Law. God knows all his servants, and the work for which each is best fitted. Here is a mirror for all preachers. They should bring to the office knowledge and experience of the working of God's grace upon the heart. They must in their office be like St. Paul—witnesses before all men, by word and conversation, of that which they have seen and heard. And their comfort may in like manner be that he who has called will strengthen, edify, and support them in their calling.

**III. HIS COMMISSION.** (Vers. 17—21.) He is praying in the temple, his soul overwhelmed by the weight of those Divine communications. The voice says, "Hasten, and go quickly out of Jerusalem!" Paul meets the call with reluctance. This struggle is among the incidents of the strife of the Spirit of God with our spirit. We would stay when he bids to go. "Lord, I will follow thee, but—" Sometimes it is fear, as in Jonah's case; sometimes it is modesty, as with Moses and Jeremiah; or conscientiousness, as with Peter (ch. x. 14); or compassion, as with Abraham at Sodom, and Paul with Israel. Over against all our *but*s stands the firm command of God, "Go hence!" Only he who overcomes his hesitation in full trust in the perfect right and wisdom of that command will be enabled by-and-by to say, "He has done all things well."—J.

**Vers. 22—29.—*Danger and deliverance.*** At length the latent envy of the Jewish audience breaks forth. "Away with such a man from the earth!"

**I. DANGER INCURRED IN WITNESS FOR THE TRUTH.** (Vers. 22—27.) The wild force of fanaticism has to be encountered again and again. These scenes are a warning against fostering it. It dishonours God, under the pretext of jealousy for his honour; ill treats the innocent; disgraces itself, turning men into wild beasts.

**II. DIVINE DELIVERANCE OF THE SERVANT OF GOD.** 1. It is brought about by the right feeling of the Roman captain, together with the civil privileges of the apostle. And he obtains a new opportunity for self-justification. 2. It tends to illustrate his character. The violence offered to him elicits a gentle and lowly reply (ver. 25; John xviii. 23). Outwardly ill treated, he remains inwardly unhurt. Momentarily trodden in the dust, he rises to eternal honours.

**III. THE NOBILITY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.** It is acquired by the new birth. It is sealed by the Spirit of God. It is proved by trial, conflict, and affliction. It appears in full glory in the heavenly state. Their privileges are—exemption from fear in the presence of the powers of this world; inviolate safety from the violence of evil men; independence of the judgment of the world. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."—J.

**Ver. 30—ch. xxiii. 11.—*Paul before the high council.*** **I. THE SIMPLICITY AND SINCERITY OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE.** 1. This gives manly courage and confidence. 2. It acts as a touchstone upon his foes, exposing their injustice, bringing those passionate and unfair in spirit to light. Ananias's answer to Paul's dignified statement is a blow on the mouth. 3. At the same time, it imparts childlike humility. Great was the provocation to a high spirit like that of Paul. His first passionate answer contrasts with that of Jesus on the same occasion (John viii. 23). But on the remonstrance of the

bystanders, he apologizes for the exclamation. Either he did not recognize Ananias for the presiding high priest; or, recognizing, he meant to intimate that, while he had all respect for the office, he had none for the person who thus abused it. "If Paul," says Luther, "thus assails the priest who was ordained according to the Law of Moses, why should I dread to assail the painted bishops and ghosts who come from the pope, without any command from God and man?" 4. Self-possession and prudence, with sincerity (ver. 6). Paul is the sheep among the wolves (Matt. x. 16). There was both tact and truth in this confession. He was a Pharisee by birth and education, and also by present position, as he upheld the authority of the Divine Law in opposition to the frivolity of the Sadducees. That was the common ground on which he and the Pharisees stood. Paul says what is simply true. It is only self-control, sincerity, and simplicity which can give true firmness and consistency.

II. THE INCONSISTENCIES OF DISHONESTY. (Vers. 7, etc.) There was a split in the assembly, occasioned by Paul's confession. It is a picture of what is ever going on in the world. Sects and parties fall asunder, and make free space and passage for the truth of God. Party spirit drew the Pharisees over to Paul, yet God's wisdom reaches its end by this means. He makes the wrath of man to praise him. The Roman officer takes, as usual, the part of an indifferentist, and orders the removal of the prisoner. Thus the contending parties are silenced, and their objects are defeated by their own passion and violence, while the cause of right prevails.

III. THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN. Great need brings great comfort. God is content with the witness he has borne. Greater than the trials from foes are those which arise from the self-doubts of a sensitive conscience. Have we said and done our best? The disappointment of the result reflects itself in the trouble of the conscience. But the results are not of our command; the purpose is. We cannot command success; but we may deserve it, and enjoy the testimony of a good conscience. The "comfort wherewith I am comforted of God." It compensates for the unjust judgment of the world; for the insults to one's office; for the griefs of self-condemnation. Above all, it strengthens for the conflicts of the future. It is a laurel on the brow of the hero of God, the word: "Thou shalt bear witness again." Henceforward the apostolic history turns upon the witness which Paul is to fulfil at Rome. Lessons: The true Christian witness must have, first of all, the good conscience within his breast. The violence of the foes of truth will then be a certificate in his favour; he will enjoy the sympathy of the honest and unprejudiced on earth, and the assurance of the Divine Judge in heaven.—J.

Vers. 1—21.—*Paul's defence of himself to the people.* I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. On the castle stairs. 2. Addressed to a tumultuous mob, full of passionate, murderous feeling, quelled for the moment by Paul's self-control and the captain's influence, showing that they feared Rome, though they feared not God, and had no desire to know the truth. 3. The magic of the Hebrew tongue, that is, the Syriac or Aramaic Hebrew, which touched their national sympathies, and at once laid to rest any suspicions that Paul was a foreigner desecrating the temple.

II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SPEECH. Facts speak for themselves. Once I was blind as you; now I see. The convert relating his experience. Power of such testimonies when simply and faithfully narrated. The evidence that Jesus was the Christ. The reason for Paul's mission to the Gentiles.

III. THE DOOM OF JERUSALEM FORESHADOWED. "They will not receive of thy testimony concerning me." Resistance to the Holy Ghost. Stephen's blood was crying out, and now they would have Paul's. The messenger sent from heaven unto the Gentiles betokened the Divine judgments about to be poured out on Jerusalem, and the blessing taken from them and given to those who would return faithfully the fruits of the vineyard.

IV. THE HOLY BOLDNESS OF THE MAN who could speak thus to an infuriated mob. His confidence in truth, in his own mission, in the works of the Spirit, in the future of the Christian Church; and his fearlessness of man.—R.

Vers. 22—30.—*Rescue of the prisoner and reference of his cause to the Jewish Sanhedrim.* Notice—



**I. THE POWER OF PREJUDICE.** The very word "Gentile" exasperates Jews. Yet they were separated from Gentiles, not to hate them, but to save them.

**II. THE CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN IGNORANCE AND VIOLENCE.** Knowledge helps patience; patience promotes knowledge.

**III. THE CRUELTY OF POWER** when it is exercised without righteousness. Torture was at once a confession of weakness and a violation of the rights of man. Law can need no cruelty to support it. It must be based upon truth and benevolence, or it is not righteous law. While the noisy tumult of the mob showed the corrupt state of the Jewish nation, the scene in the castle revealed the imperfection and worthlessness of mere human rule. Both facts were the cries of the world for the kingdom of God.

**IV. THE INFLUENCE OF TRUE RELIGION** in enlightening the mind, calming the feelings, strengthening the will, and preparing the man for trials. The example of Paul one of exalted self-possession and heroism, together with astonishing intelligence and discernment of character. The thought of using his Roman citizenship at that moment was doubtless a suggestion of God's Spirit.

**V. PROVIDENCE** in the government of the world. The Roman state needed to prepare the way for the gospel. The two citizenships—of the earthly kingdom, of the heavenly, compared in the two men, Lysias and Paul. Little the parents of the apostle could have anticipated how that Roman privilege would work into his history. We should give our children all we can to prepare them for future life. Grace and providence work together. The world's alarm opens the way for the gospel.

**VI. THE REAL CONFLICT**, not between Christianity and political power, but between true and false religion. The chief priests and the council face to face with the representative of Christ. A corrupted Judaism must be swept out of the way. After that is done, then Christianity will be ready for its still greater mission to evangelize the whole world, beginning with the Roman empire. The three parties represented—the Christian, the rabbinical, the heathen.—R.

**Ver. 1.—A model self-defence.** We enter in this chapter on matter which is to some degree repetition (ch. ix.). The repetition is valuable for several reasons. It both adds and omits some particulars. It gives us Paul's own version in his own words, instead of what must still have been essentially his own version, but which was probably rehearsed in the historian's words. It gives us the advantage also of comparison in those parts which exhibit slight differences, and we gain a fuller impression of Paul's experience. We may imagine that Paul had been almost tremblingly anxious the past hour or two for this opportunity; and the moment that the lashed and angry waves were hushed was a proud moment for him had he been merely the human orator, but much rather a prized moment as he was the Christian orator. He has heard wild and baseless accusations passionately hurled at him, and just so long as might were right, he might be supposed to hold himself answerable to unjust earthly judges, as well as to the one true Judge and one merciful Master. But beyond a doubt something else than personal defence was in his heart, and his eye 'screed a grand opportunity. For this "defence" it may be claimed that it is—

**I. THE DEFENCE OF A MAN.** For: 1. It *must be held to be the outcome of*, not craven fear, but the rising spirit of a true man. Very certain it is that not one out of a hundred would have risen to the occasion. Disheartenment, despair, perhaps disdain, would have locked close the lips of most men. But Paul does not consent to "give up," or to show anything in the shape of temper answering to the intolerant spirit of the multitude. 2. It was the acknowledgment (however undeserved in the individual case) of the respect naturally due in the society of human life from one man to his fellows. Such respect is all the more to be honoured in the observance by the man who, whether Paul or Galileo, may be confessedly making a "new departure" of wide significance. History shows that it has been the lot of such men, not in religion only, to be made sufferers. The noblest examples of martyrs have been of those who have done nothing to bring it upon themselves by any manifestation of the defiant spirit. 3. Every word of it was the utterance of conscious rectitude. 4. It was a noble, typical example of the strength "in its glory" of the individual conscience against the senseless strength and intolerance of a mob.

**II. THE DEFENCE OF A CHRISTIAN.** For: 1. This defence was through the whole

length of it a connected confession to a change wrought by Christ. The change was a great one. The pride of man offered every conceivable hindrance to it. The surrender was one that meant the profoundest acknowledgment of the opponent's victory. And Christ was the victor's Name. When Paul, therefore, defends his altered self and his altered course of life, his altered faith and hopes and methods, there is not an aspect of the defence which can be described as other than Christian. 2. The defence of *himself* was forthwith transmuted by Paul into a testimony for Christ. This was the mark and very stamp of both Christian design and Christian method. With manifest fire of zeal, he seizes the favourable and welcomed opportunity. He gives us the impression that this is *the thing* that has been in his eye of late. Paul may have been answerable in some degree for the commotion of the day. If so, now his task, embraced with all the energy that the very spirit of fidelity can throw into it, is to proclaim Christ. And when a man will so even vindicate himself as yet more to testify Christ, his self-vindication merits at least the title of the defence of a true Christian man. 3. This defence was perfect in its temper, and free from all betrayal of irritation; it makes its statement of facts with the utmost simplicity, but with unwavering confidence. 4. Lastly, at the point of supreme danger, it does not turn aside. The fact which Paul well knew was intolerable to the ears of his hearers, but vital to the truth, is steadily pursued, is arrived at, and then is distinctly announced, without an attempt at qualifying it or softening its effect. This was "not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God." And it marked the quality of the Christian hero; it spoke the firmness of the Christian martyr; perhaps best of all it established conclusively the title of Paul to the name of the true Christian man.—B.

Vers. 1—22.—*The testimony of religious experience.* Not now dwelling upon the details of Saul's conversion, treated of for the most part under the consideration of the ninth chapter, we may observe that we have here Paul's own account of it, that is to say, we have his own rehearsal of his conversion, and so far forth religious experience. We may use the opportunity for the purpose of illustrating the right occasion and use of the individual declaring to the world "what the Lord has done for his soul. This is in some cases an undoubted duty, and the neglect of it an undoubted dereliction of duty. Many, no doubt, are the occasions that lie on the border-line of expediency, and even of duty. And, as in many, many other things, it is then that the solemn claims of individual responsibility are either seen and honoured or dishonoured. We may, therefore, observe some of the facts involved in a man's confession of his own religious experience before the Church and the world.

I. IT AMOUNTS TO A FORCIBLE TESTIFYING TO THE FACT OF THE WORKING AND FORCE OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN HUMAN LIFE.

II. IT IS A STIMULUS OR OTHERWISE AN ABIDING REBUKE TO OTHER MEN WHO OWN TO NO LIVING CONSCIOUSNESS OF THAT PRESENCE OR CO-OPERATION WITH IT.

III. IT IS HELPFUL GUIDANCE IN MANY DIRECTIONS TO THOSE "WHO BELIEVE" IN THEIR OWN RELIGIOUS COURSE.

IV. IT FREQUENTLY OFFERS AMAZING INSTANCES OF THE GOODNESS, LOVE, AND POWER OF GOD AND OF CHRIST AND OF THE SPIRIT.

V. IT ABOUNDS IN EXEMPLIFICATIONS OF HUMAN NATURE UNDER CERTAIN MOST SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATMENT, AND OF ITS BEHAVIOUR UNDER SUCH TREATMENT.

VI. IT IS NOT ONLY HONOURING TO GOD AND A GLORIFYING OF HIM, BUT IT IS USEFUL TO MEN, TO BIND THEMSELVES BY SOLEMN OBLIGATION OF PUBLIC PROFESSION BEFORE MEN.—B.

Ver. 14.—*"That Just One."* Paul here quotes from Ananias a term used to designate Jesus Christ. Its Scripture history as applied to Christ, and its significance as touching some of the deepest aspects of Christ's relations to humanity, are very worthy of some fixed attention. Notice—

I. THE SCRIPTURE HISTORY OF THE EPITHET, "THAT JUST ONE," AS APPLIED TO CHRIST. Six occasions in the historical portions of the New Testament illustrate its use, namely, when it comes from the lips of Pilate's wife and afterwards of Pilate (Matt. xxvii. 19, 24); from the lips of the Roman centurion (Luke xxiii. 47); of Peter

(ch. iii. 14); of Stephen (ch. vii. 52); and of Ananias in the special quotation of Paul now (ver. 14). These testimonies are noticeable for the directness of their language, for the special identification of Christ as "this just Man," or "that just Man," or "the Just One," and for the character in each case of those who uttered them.

II. THE DEEPER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SAME EPITHET AS APPLIED TO CHRIST. 1. Christ is the perfectly "righteous" One, and the only perfectly righteous One. *All* others have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. No other has kept the Law entirely—kept it in deed, in word, in thought, in affection, in zeal. 2. Christ's perfect righteousness is the qualification of the Mediator, that real, solemn, thrilling relationship which he sustained as between God and man. 3. Christ's perfect righteousness constituted the essential qualification of the propitiatory sacrifice. He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. iii. 18). The "Advocate with the Father, and the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world, is Jesus Christ the Righteous" (1 John ii. 2). 4. Christ's perfect righteousness constitutes the perfection of his fitness to be Teacher and Exemplar to men on earth. 5. Christ's perfect righteousness is the stability of his throne of judgment, to be ere very long beheld and approached by every man who is or ever has been. He is "the Lord, the righteous Judge" (2 Tim. iv. 8).—B.

Vers. 14, 15.—*The calling and the gifts of God.* The apostle himself elsewhere speaks (Rom. xi. 29) of "the gifts and the calling of God;" and of them he says that they "are without repentance." The glorious occasion to which he gives prominence in the words of these verses exhibits the "calling" first, and the "gifts" next. At the same time, this same passage describes the calling of God (separate and sovereign act though it be in itself) as introductory to responsibilities, privileges, and gifts that followed upon it. There is not such a thing as a calling of God, to lie dormant. There is not such a thing as a calling of God, to terminate in the mere use or enjoyment of the person called. A calling of God infers a commission consequent upon it—nay, nothing less than *involved* in it under any circumstances. Here, however, it is not implied only, it is expressed as well, and that in a very significant mode. For immediate upon the mention of the calling or choosing comes that of—

I. A GREAT QUALIFICATION. 1. The Christian apostle, minister, teacher, must be one who "knows the will" of God. 2. He must be one who knows it very directly from the fountain-head. Hearsay will not suffice, imagination will not suffice, reason will not suffice.

II. A GRAND PRIVILEGE IN CONNECTION WITH THAT QUALIFICATION. Though Paul "was as one born out of due season," these things are vouchsafed to him, namely, to "see" and to "hear" the "Just One." Some think Saul had seen Christ in the flesh. This passage may contribute something confessedly inconclusive to the disadvantage of the supposition. It is overwhelmingly improbable, in that Paul never speaks of it, as surely he would have done if it had been the case, even as he speaks of having seen Stephen and assisted at his martyrdom. This great grace, however, is now vouchsafed to Saul, that with vision of thousandfold force he is given to see the very Jesus ascended, and that with a keenness to hear beyond anything that he had experienced before he is granted to hear the own voice of the glorified Man Jesus. It is not that Saul had *earned* the gift—nay, it is not that to the end of a devoted life of fullest self-surrender he will ever be able to earn the gift. Paul is the disclaimer of merit. Nor is all the grace for Paul. How many lesser successors to him have taken their share of benefit, and the whole Church *its* share, when these have recalled that Jesus teaches: 1. How near a connection is necessary between himself and his servant-pioneers of the truth and heralds of salvation. 2. To this end how near he is willing to condescend to come to those servants. 3. And how he would embolden them to draw near to him in most believing faith and most loving trust of the heart, when the times should be such that *he* would no longer come in vision to them.

III. A VAST RESPONSIBILITY. It needs an angel intellect and an archangel heart to set an estimate at all equal to the truth upon the work committed into human hands when the ministry of Christ is accepted by them. They are then "witnesses for Christ to men." And three features of their great responsibility are here shadowed forth. 1.



They are witnesses to a living One, a Personage, and not to a mere truth. 2. They are witnesses to him of the things that they know of "the Word of life" (1 John i. 1), through having seen him, heard him, looked upon him, and handled him, all in the deepest sense. 3. They are witnesses "to all men," as far as they can possibly in any way reach all men, and under any circumstances to all *impartially*. Deep was the impression that these communications (unmentioned elsewhere) had made on the mind of Paul. The words of Ananias, inspired most freshly as he was from the source, had dwelt deep-stored in his memory. And now, some twenty-five years afterwards, at a crisis most opportune, they come to the surface, they are full-charged with their own vitality; and are practically commended by Paul as embodying the charter of all who should be "witnesses for Christ."—B.

Vers. 18—21.—*Men's past sins often the unknown determiners of their future life, its opportunities, and its disqualifications* It is possible to take different views of the drift and the intended tenor of this passage. The language of Saul (which Paul now quotes), as found in vers. 19, 20, will be very far from powerless, whether read as a view humbly offered in harmony with the command just laid upon him, or as perhaps is the more probable, in deprecation of it. The passage, however, reminds us, amid high associations of great truths, of solemn far-reaching principles in human life. The retribution which it enwraps is not that of the severity of judgment to the sinner, but of the inevitableness of that cause and effect which speak a Creator-God of infinite wisdom, and a creature-man of reason, of moral capabilities, and of a certain freedom of action, that lies at the root of moral responsibility and final accountability. Notice, then—

I. A CAREER OF UNTOLD POSSIBILITIES OF USEFULNESS AND HONOUR IN THE MOTHER CITY JERUSALEM CUT SHORT FOR PAUL. 1. We could imagine reasons why Paul would have felt his highest ambition fired by testifying, working, suffering, and dying for Jesus in Jerusalem, as . (1) The mother city of the land and of God's favoured people, renowned with ancient and special renown. (2) The place at the very heart of Jewish life, where he would have longed to recant most publicly his one-time errors of creed, and retrieve whatever it were possible to retrieve of the effects of those errors. This would have been of what was most noble among the characteristics of Paul. (3) The place which held the same relation to the religious world that Rome did to the heathen world. (4) The place where the Master bore the grandest testimony of all his course, and suffered and died. 2. It needs little imagination to see that, let alone any sense of a noble ambition, Paul would feel that it would be one of the grandest opportunities of usefulness, at the very centre of typical and peculiar risk and danger. From all this Paul is interdicted by a voice of sovereign authority, and on the plain ground of his own past of error.

II. A REMEDY IN CHRIST AGAINST ABJECT HOPELESSNESS, AGAINST SETTLED DESPAIR, AGAINST REMORSEFUL THROWING UP OF ENDEAVOUR, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE RETRIBUTIVE ASPECTS OF HUMAN LIFE. The veto of Jesus Christ, spoken with authority to Paul, is nothing else than *linked with a summons* to other work and another sphere, that may turn into all equal usefulness and probably usefulness far greater. Notice the method of that summons. 1. Though to state the ground of it might be pain and might give pain, it is not wrapt in vague mystery and unsatisfying innuendo. It is, on the other hand, a grand instance of "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." 2. The summons exhibits a very distinct and emphatic value set upon the life and the useful employment of the servant *somewhere* or other. Twice, nay, *thrice* repeated is the direction to *depart* with "haste," "quickly," and unquestioningly. Men may depart like Jonah. But also they may depart for (1) Christ's own command, announced in the individual conscience or by the living Spirit; and (2) for greater toil and exposure, instead of for ease and hiding from work. 3. The summons announces, by a most gracious anticipation, an highly important substitute career. The man who has incapacitated himself by follies, by errors, even by sins, for some of the noblest of Christian service shall still not be cast away as useless. He is still good to do something; yes, to do much. The Master does not refuse the love or the service of the fallen, when they return. Nor does he consent to treat with them only through others. First he saves them and protects them, and suggests his care and love of them. Then

he gives them their work, though "far hence." And lastly, he does not withhold from their ear to hear his own voice, "*I will send thee.*" What trust, what love, what forgivingness, and what streams of hope Jesus has to give—and gives to his own!—B.

**Ver. 3.—*The sincerity of St. Paul's Judaism.*** "I am verily a man which am a Jew." This remarkable speech was addressed to a particular audience, under particular circumstances, and it was precisely adapted to that audience. It took careful account of their knowledge and of their prejudices. It was conciliatory in tone, but firm to the truth and manly in spirit. It is impossible for us to admire too highly the calmness and the self-command of the apostle under such perilous circumstances. Instances may be given from political life of the power of a skilful orator to sway an excited mob, such as that of Lamartine in times of the French Revolution. The introduction of this homily should deal with (1) the scene; (2) the audience; (3) the orator. 1. *The scene.* Dean Plumptre has the following suggestive note:—"The position was one which raised him (St. Paul) above the people, and the characteristic gesture commanded instant attention. And he spoke, not as they expected, in the Greek, which belonged to one who fraternized with the Gentiles, but in the Hebrew, or Aramaic, which he had studied at the feet of Gamaliel. It was a strange scene for that Feast of Pentecost. The face and form of the speaker may have been seen from time to time by some during his passing visits to Jerusalem; but there must have been many who had not heard him take part in public action since the day when, twenty-five years before, he had kept the garments of those who were stoning Stephen. And now he was there, accused of the selfsame crimes, making his defence before a crowd as wild and frenzied as that of which he had then been the leader." 2. *The audience.* Notice that it was largely composed of foreign Jews, who were present at the feast; and that those foreign Jews were often more intensely bigoted than the Jerusalem Jews,—they would certainly have more knowledge of St. Paul, and more personally antagonistic feelings against him. Some of them had recognized him, and raised the excitement which nearly led to his death. Show how utterly unreasonable such a mob becomes; no appeal can be made to their intelligence; usually they can only be dispersed by force, or their excitement must be allowed to spend itself and wear itself out. 3. *The orator;* a weak, frail man, with a personal presence which men called contemptible, but with the natural gift for swaying an audience. As soon as he spoke men were hushed to listen, as they always are when the born orator stands before them. Perhaps St. Paul's gifts as a writer have filled our thought, so that we have not duly recognized what a splendid "command of men" he had in his great gift of speech. The point which he sought to impress on his audience on this occasion was the "*sincerity of his Judaism.*" That was the thing impugned. He was declared to be such an unworthy Jew that he had defiled the temple by bringing an Ephesian Gentile into it. The proper answer was a full declaration of his honest and complete loyalty to Judaism. This he made—

**I. BY ADDRESSING THEM IN THE HEBREW TONGUE.** Not in Gentile Greek. "It might be that he did this simply because they understood it better, but it may have been also because, as the language showed him to be a countryman of their own, they were disposed to think him less guilty than the Asian Jews had represented him to be" (F. Bungener). "One who spoke in Hebrew was not likely to blaspheme the sacred Hebrew books."

**II. BY ASSURING THEM OF HIS LIFELONG LOYALTY TO HEBREW PRINCIPLES.** His birth was unquestionably Jewish. His education was most distinctly Jewish; for he was even educated at Jerusalem, and by their most honoured teacher. His Judaism was so sincere and so intense that he had been the most active and energetic persecutor of the Nazarenes. And Ananias, the well-known devout Jew, had brought God's commands to him (ver. 12).

**III. BY AFFIRMING THAT, IF HE SEEMED TO HAVE TAKEN A NEW LINE, HE HAD ONLY OBEYED JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF THEIR HEBREW FATHERS.** This is the point of St. Paul's advance. Jehovah had appeared to him, had given him special directions, and, as a loyal Jew, he could only obey those directions. Jehovah had shown him that Jesus was Messiah. Jehovah had sent him forth on his mission among the Gentiles. He had never dishonoured Judaism, never broken with it. He was still the same "born Jew" as ever (ver. 14).—R. T.

**Vers. 6—10.**—*The claims of a personal Divine revelation.* The incidents here narrated have been previously considered in their bearing on St. Paul's conversion. The apostle now repeats the story, with a definite purpose. He is on his defence, and he is striving to show that throughout his life he had been loyal to Judaism, and in the matters which men misrepresented he had but followed and obeyed special Divine directions given to him. He had visions and commands direct from God, and, as a Jew, he "dared not be disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Such a defence was most effective for his audience, as no true Jew would deny that Jehovah might choose any of his people for special service, and give them immediate visions and directions. So we find the people heard the apostle patiently until he referred to the "Gentiles," and then national jealousy and religious bigotry were aroused, and uncontrolled passion put St. Paul's life again in peril.

**I. PERSONAL DIVINE REVELATIONS HAVE COME IN EVERY AGE.** Distinguish between the ordinary inspirations which may direct a man's preaching and writing, and the special occasions on which God may tell his mind and purpose, or give some trust and some work to an individual. Such personal revelations do not necessarily affirm the superiority in character, or in Divine favour, of the person communicated with; but they always declare the Divine recognition of a special fitness and adaptation for the work assigned; and our attention should be fixed on the fitness and the work rather than on the *privilege* that may be involved in having such a trust. Illustrations of personal revelations may be taken from (1) the patriarchal age; (2) the times of the judges; (3) the prophets. It should be shown how well the selection of individuals, and direct communication with them, fits in with the idea of a theocracy. God, as actual and ever-present Sovereign of the nation, has the right to ask for any man's service, and to address himself directly to whomsoever he pleases. And nothing is more reasonable than to expect he will do so. Coming to later times, we get illustration (4) from John the Baptist; (5) from the Lord Jesus Christ regarded as a man called to a special mission; and (6) from the apostles, e.g. St. Peter in the matter of Cornelius. What is called the *conversion* of St. Paul, but is more properly his *call*, is a case in perfect harmony with all that had gone before in the history of the nation. The God of the fathers, Jehovah, the theocratic King, had, by a gracious manifestation of himself and of his will, called the apostle to his service. This was the sole and all-sufficient explanation of his life and conduct; and this became his entire defence—"A revelation from God, the God of my fathers, has come to me, and I must obey it." Compare the main argument of Stephen's speech, which is this—God has not only spoken to our own nation in the Mosaic system, he has spoken directly to individuals age after age, but it has always been characteristic of the Jewish nation that they have resisted these prophet-revealers of God's will. Theoretically, they would admit that God might send messages directly to individuals; practically, they refused to recognize such messengers. This was proved once again in the case of St. Paul.

**II. PERSONAL DIVINE REVELATIONS MAY COME NOW.** This truth it may be difficult for us to receive; and, indeed, it needs to be stated with careful limitations and qualifications. Under the ministration of the Spirit, and with the Spirit actually witnessing in our hearts, it would seem that we can expect no direct Divine communications. Yet they do surely come to open hearts. It may be shown that they are granted: 1. In the spheres of truth. We cannot conceive of finality in the written revelation we have, but we may be sure that all further revelations will be in perfect harmony with that we have. We may, however, rather look for new apprehensions of truth than new truth. 2. In the spheres of duty. In the perplexing circumstances of life, hearts that are really open to God, and dependent on him, do receive direct Divine guidance. 3. In the spheres of work. God still speaks directly to the souls of his servants, calling some to the missionary field, some to the ministry, some to service for the children, and some to philanthropic labours. And, still, none of us may be "disobedient unto the heavenly vision."—R. T.

**Ver. 21.**—*Paul's commission to the Gentiles.* "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." In the narrative given in ch. ix. 15 this command is said to have come direct to Ananias, and to have been by him communicated to St. Paul. Of the direct message to St. Paul himself subsequently, at Jerusalem, this appears to be our only



account (comp. the narrative in ch. xxvi. 17). It is to be noticed that, though St. Paul thus distinctly knew what his mission was, he waited patiently until Divine directions or Divine providence clearly opened the way for him. And, while he waited, he cheerfully did the work which came to his hand. We proceed to dwell on three points: (1) the sphere to which St. Paul was sent; (2) the fitness of St. Paul for work in this particular sphere; and (3) the influence which work in this sphere had upon St. Paul's own apprehensions of the truth. Noticing first what a strain upon his own Jewish feelings it must have involved for him to undertake this work, and how his doing so proves the sincerity and completeness of his conversion.

I. THE SPHERE TO WHICH THE APOSTLE WAS SENT. "The Gentiles." Jews divided the whole world into Jews and Gentiles; so St. Paul's mission was to all outside the Jewish nation. Illustrate how the prevalence of the Greek tongue, and the wide supremacy of the Roman rule, at this time opened the whole world to the gospel. Illustrate what variety of classes and of people the apostle met with in travelling, as he did, from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum. Recall the circumstances under which the apostle came to leave the synagogues and devote himself exclusively to the Gentile populations. And show what preparation there was for the gospel in Gentile spheres, (1) in the common religious wants of men; and (2) in the sense of dissatisfaction with idolatry which then so widely prevailed. As representative of the various Gentile spheres, give some account of Lystra, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome.

II. THE FITNESS OF THE APOSTLE FOR WORK IN THIS PARTICULAR SPHERE. Find the fitnesses in: 1. His birth as a Grecian Jew. 2. His knowledge of the Greek language, and partial Greek education. All the other apostles were Aramaic Jews. St. Paul's early associations prepared him to take larger and more comprehensive views of Christian truth, when once his strong Jewish prejudices were overcome. 3. His unquestioning sense of a Divine call. 4. The permanent influence exerted on him by Stephen's death, and probably by Stephen's teachings. 5. The clear apprehension he had of Christian truth, in its distinction from, but full harmony with, the principles of Judaism. 6. Further fitness may be found on a careful estimate of St. Paul's peculiarities of mind, disposition, and character.

III. THE INFLUENCE WHICH WORK IN HIS SPHERE HAD UPON THE APOSTLE'S OWN APPREHENSIONS OF THE TRUTH. This is a difficult subject to treat, and involves a very close study of St. Paul's doctrinal position at different points of his ministry. To open it out wisely, the Epistles must be chronologically arranged and fitted into the record in the Acts, and compared with the apostle's speeches. An illustration may be taken from the Epistle to the Ephesians, which clearly shows that the mystical and superstitious people of Ephesus exercised such an influence on St. Paul as led him to consider some great speculative questions, and, we may say, tended to exercise and develop his mystical faculty. The influence of work among the Gentiles may be illustrated in relation: 1. *To doctrine*. It led to the first attempts at a philosophy of the Christian religion. 2. *To practical Christian life*. St. Paul had to find out how to adjust Christian principles to Gentile life and manners, and so he was led to develop a system of Christian ethics. Impress that the work to which God calls us will also be (1) our service to others; and (2) our own personal culture.—R. T.

Vers. 22, 23.—*The unreasoning excitement of crowds*. The action of this crowd is in most respects similar to that of crowds in all ages and in all districts; but in some of its features it was characteristically Eastern. "A great similarity appears between the conduct of the Jews when the chief captain of the Roman garrison at Jerusalem presented himself in the temple, and the behaviour of the Persian peasants when they go to court to complain of the governors under whom they live, upon their oppressions becoming intolerable. Sir John Chardin tells us respecting them, that they carry their complaints against their governors by companies, consisting of several hundreds, and sometimes of a thousand; they repair to that gate of the palace near to which their prince is most likely to be, where they begin to make the most horrid cries, tearing their garments, and throwing dust into the air, at the same time demanding justice. The king, upon hearing these cries, sends to know the occasion of them. The people deliver their complaint in writing, upon which he lets them know that he will commit the cognizance of the affair to some one by whom justice is usually done them"

(Paxton). Compare the excitement of the multitudes assembled in the Ephesian theatre (ch. xix. 29—34).

I. THE PERILOUS INFLUENCE OF POPULAR SENTIMENT. Masses readily take up prejudices and give way to mere feeling, and so are led to do terrible things. Illustrate from the riots of country towns in the older election-times, when the people were excited by political sentiment; or by the violent scenes of the French Revolution. It is usually true of all mobs that "the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." Sentiment is valuable as giving tone and feeling to action, but sentiment alone can never be allowed to decide and control action, because it tends to make a man at once passionate and weak. There is no wise decision, no calm judgment, no definite purpose, no solid strength of will, and so sentiment leads men to do things of which they are afterwards ashamed, to forget the reasonable claims of others, and to commit great social wrongs. The Christian man's duty, wherever his lot may be cast, is: 1. To strive against yielding to popular sentiments on (1) social, (2) political, (3) religious subjects, as injurious to his own spiritual life, and likely to make him unjust toward others. 2. To use his influence to check public excitement, and to disseminate right principles. In religious spheres, yielding to "sentiment" has often been the cause of public and private persecution. In common life, reason is the proper check of sentiment. In religious spheres, the revelation given us in God's Word, and the direct illuminations of God's Spirit, are the proper checks. Illustrate how, in religious spheres, untamed sentiment has often developed into "mania."

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL POPULAR LEADERS. They gain their power by appeal to sentiment. Illustrate from the incidents of the text. The leaders of the Judaic party knew perfectly well that they had no case against the apostle, but they appealed to the prejudice of the people, and excited their feeling into passion, which might have led to St. Paul's death within the temple courts. Opportunity is here given to speak of the valuable work done by the revivalist and the missionary, and at the same time of the responsibility of such workers, in the influence they gain over masses of people. So far as their work is merely an appeal to sentiment, it can exert but a passing, and only too possibly a mischievous, influence. So far as they become teachers of the truth and persuaders of men to duty, their work will be permanent and blessed. The Crusades illustrate the sway of the masses by sentiment; the Reformation the sway of the masses by truth.

III. THE HOPELESSNESS OF REASONING WITH EXCITED CROWDS. St. Paul tried, but he found it vain: they were carried away by the mere sound of the word "Gentiles." Compare the scheme of the town-clerk at Ephesus. Excited masses can only be interested until their passion dies down, or dispersed by physical force. Reasoning is of no use until men have become reasonable.

Show that Christ never works upon the mere crowd. He and his servants make their appeal to men who have their power of reason. They use emotion and affection, but in subordination to reason. They work by the enthusiasm of numbers, but subordinate this influence to the enforcement of the saving truth.—R. T.

Ver. 25.—*Times to suffer, and times to get relief from suffering.* This subject is suggested by the fact that, although the apostle's plea of his Roman birthright would have always stood him in good stead, he only used it occasionally; from which fact we may assume that he sometimes felt it was his duty to submit to suffering, and that, at other times, he equally felt it his duty to resist suffering. Probably a careful estimate of the circumstances connected with each case led to his decisions. Here we may see that no special testimony could be made by his patient enduring of suffering, seeing that he was among strangers, who knew nothing of him or his mission, so he felt at liberty to secure relief from indignity and pain, and appealed for his rights as a Roman citizen. The apostle spoke as they were preparing to scourge him. According to the Roman custom, he was stripped to the waist, and tied with leather thongs to the column, or whipping-post, which was used within the fortress for this kind of torture. "It was unlawful to scourge a Roman citizen in any case; it was an aggravation so to torture him as slaves were tortured only as a means of inquiry" (see ch. xvi. 37). Remember the familiar passage, Eccles. iii. 1—8.

I. CHRIST'S CALL TO SUFFER. Of St. Paul Christ had said, "I will show him how

great things he must suffer for my Name's sake." So to his early disciples Christ spoke of persecution and suffering as part of his disciples' necessary lot. Compare his teachings in the sermon on the mount (Matt. v. 10—12) with John xv. 18—21. 1. As an historical fact, the earlier apostles found suffering attend on fulfilling Christ's mission; and the Apostle Paul had a life full of peril and of pain. 2. As a fact of present observation, suffering is very largely the Christian's lot. It comes partly by reason of his conflict with evil in himself and in the world, and partly as a Divine arrangement for his moral testing and training. 3. As a doctrine of the Divine Word, suffering is (1) a means of sanctifying to the believer, "Tribulation worketh patience," etc.; (2) a means of witnessing to the world the power of God's sustaining grace and the beauty of the Christian virtues. God has such witnesses in his *great sufferers*, in every age and in every sphere of life.

II. CHRIST'S CALL TO AVOID SUFFERING. See his instructions as given to the apostles and the "seventy," when he sent them on their trial mission. If persecuted in one city, they were to flee to another. Nay, in this avoidance of suffering, our Lord set us his own example; for, on more than one occasion he went away from a neighbourhood which had become perilous, and escaped from those who would cast him from the hill-top. So St. Paul, in connection with our text, felt justified in avoiding and resisting suffering. The practical difficulty we find is to know when we should bear and when we should resist; and the following suggestions may be fully illustrated:—1. When we can recognize an immediate good in our sufferings, either a blessing of men or the glory of God, we should be prepared cheerfully to bear. 2. When the suffering plainly comes in the orderings of God's providence, we ought to bear it. 3. When we find that we can, by patient suffering, make a needed witness for the Christian truth or the Christian spirit, we should be willing to suffer. 4. When we find ourselves among strangers and enemies we may use our influence to avoid suffering. 5. And when our suffering plainly comes from the mere wilfulness or the pure ignorance of men, we do right to resist. It may also be urged that we must always follow along the line of "conscience" and "duty," whatever consequences may follow. Therefore the "three Hebrew youths" dare not shrink from the fiery furnace, nor Daniel from the den of lions. Impress that we have an inward leading of God's Spirit, even as St. Paul had; and that, if we will follow the lead in all simplicity, we shall be able to decide, in the circumstances of life that arise, whether it is our duty to suffer or to avoid suffering. Whether we bear or whether we refuse to bear, we must seek to glorify Christ, and do all things as part of our loving life-service rendered to him.—R. T.

Ver. 28.—*Naturally and spiritually free born.* Rights of citizenship were obtained in various ways and on various grounds. Some men had it by birth, others by gift, others by purchase, others as the public recognition of heroic deeds. These may be illustrated in connection with the citizenship of London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other large cities. Roman citizenship was once sold at a very high rate, but in later times its value was lowered, and it was bartered for a trifle. It is not known how St. Paul's parents obtained their citizen rights, but the apostle held his as an inheritance. St. Paul was not a citizen by virtue of his having been born in Tarsus. "That city, in consideration of its sufferings under Cassius, and because of its adherence to Julius Cæsar, was admitted by Antony to many privileges; but it was not a colony, only a free city, and that did not confer citizenship. Some of the apostle's ancestors, it may be assumed, had been admitted to citizenship in acknowledgment of good service, civil or military." A distinction is made, which men still recognize, between *acquired* rights and *natural* rights; but a far higher value is set on the rights of birth than on those which can be obtained in any other way. We fix attention on the fact that St. Paul was *twice free born*. He held right of birth into Roman citizenship, and right of the new Divine birth into the kingdom of Christ and of heaven.

I. THE PRIVILEGES OF HUMAN BIRTH. 1. Illustrate what positions their birth puts some men in, and what consequent trusts and responsibilities come upon them. 2. Show that such privileges are not to be despised by Christian people, because they may give them noble opportunities of serving Christ. 3. Point out that any envy of those born to high station is unworthy of all who feel aright the honour of having any kind or degree of trust from God. 4. And impress that the greater the trust of position ar.1



privilege which a man may have, the heavier will be his judgment if he misuses his powers and privileges. "Of him that hath much will be required."

II. THE PRIVILEGES OF DIVINE BIRTH. Explain the Scripture figures of "new birth," "being born again," and "regeneration." Illustrate that no man can acquire a place in Christ's kingdom by any (1) wealth, (2) merit, (3) or effort. The only entrance is by a Divine birth: "Ye must be born again;" the only possible right of the Christian is his birthright. This kind of right excludes all pride and self-satisfaction. "We are saved by grace." It gives to God all the glory; for we are "born of God." It changes all the aspects and relations of our lives, so that we seem to have wakened up into a new world with new powers. It lays us under serious obligations, appoints for us high and holy duties, and holds out before us a glorious future. If the Roman citizen was bound to walk worthily of his citizenship, and honour the Roman name wherever he might go, much more should those who are born of God "walk as children of light," "walk worthy of the vocation by which they are called." See St. Paul's statement, "Our citizenship is in heaven."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

Ver. 1.—*Looking steadfastly on for earnestly beholding, A.V.; brethren for men and brethren, A.V.; I have lived before God, etc., for I have lived, etc., before God, A.V.* Looking steadfastly; ἀρεσέας, as in ch. i. 10; iii. 4, 12; vi. 15; vii. 55; x. 4; xi. 6; xiii. 9; xiv. 9. It governs a dative here, as in ch. iii. 12; x. 4; xiv. 9; Luke iv. 20; xxii. 56; elsewhere it is followed by εἰς. Brethren. He omits here the "fathers" which he added in ch. xxii. 1. If there is any special significance in the omission, it may be that he meant now to assume a less apologetic tone, and to speak as an equal to equals. Howson and Lewin think that he spoke as being, or having been, himself a member of the Sanhedrim. But he may have meant merely a friendly address to his countrymen. I have lived, etc. (πεπολιτευμαι τῷ Θεῷ); comp. Phil. iii. 20; I have had my conversation (vitam degi) unto God, or, for God, i.e. according to the will of God, with a view to God as the end of all my actions. So Josephus ('De Maccabeis,' sect. 4) says that Antiochus Epiphanes made a law that all Jews should be put to death οἵτινες φάνοιεν τῷ πατρίῳ νόμῳ πολιτευόμενοι, "who were seen to live according to the Law of their fathers." And so in 2 Macc. vi. 1 it is said that he sent to compel the Jews to forsake the Law of their fathers—καὶ τοῖς τοῦ Θεοῦ νόμοις μὴ πολιτευσθαι—and not live agreeably to the laws of God. And once more, in 3 Macc. iii. 3, 4 the Jews are said to fear God and to be τῷ τούτου νόμῳ πολιτευόμενοι, living according to his Law. Here, then, πολιτευσθαι τῷ Θεῷ means to live in obedience to God. St. Paul boldly asserts his undeviating compliance with the Law of God, as a good and consistent Jew (Phil. iii. 6).

Ver. 2.—Ananias, the son of Nebelæus, ἀννῶρος or Joseph the son of Camēi, or

Camydus ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. i. 3; v. 2), appears to have been actually high priest at this time. He was a violent, haughty, gluttonous, and rapacious man, and yet looked up to by the Jews ("très considéré," Renan). He had probably lately returned from Rome, having been confirmed, as it seems, in his office by Claudius, to whom Quadratus, the predecessor of Felix, had sent him as a prisoner, to answer certain charges of sedition against him. He seems to have been high priest for the unusually long period of over ten years—from A.D. 48 to A.D. 59 (see Josephus, 'Ant. Jud.,' xx. v. 2; vi. 2, 3; viii. 8). But, on the other hand, Josephus ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. viii. 5) speaks of a certain Jonathan being high priest during the government of Felix, and being murdered by the Sicarii at his instigation; which looks as if Ananias's high priesthood had been interrupted. It would appear, too, from xx. viii. 8, that Ismael the son of Fabi succeeded to Jonathan, not to Ananias, as is usually supposed. But the question is involved in great obscurity.

Ver. 3.—And for for, A.V.; according to for after, A.V. God shall smite thee (τύπτει σε μέλλει). A distinct announcement of something that would happen. (For the incident itself, comp. 1 Kings xxii. 24, 25; Jer. xxviii. 15, 17; and ch. xii. 1, 2, 23) Ananias perished by the daggers of the Sicarii (Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' ii. xvii. 9), at the beginning of the Jewish war under the procuratorship of Florus, in the year A.D. 66. He had been previously deposed from the high priesthood by King Agrippa toward the close of the government of Felix ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. viii. 8), about A.D. 59, or early in A.D. 60, less than two years from the present time. Thou whited wall, This expression is admirably illustrated by the quotations from Seneca in Kuinoel: "These base and sordid spirits are like the

walls of their own houses, only beautiful on the outside." "What are our gilt roofs but lies? for we well know that under the gilding unseemly beams are concealed." "It is not only our walls which are coated with a thin outward ornament; the greatness of those men whom you see strutting in their pride is mere tinsel; look beneath the surface, and you will see all the evil that is hid under that thin crust of dignity" ('De Provid.' c. 6, and 'Epist.' 115). Ananias was sitting in his priestly robes of office, presiding over the council in power and dignity, and presumably a righteous judge, but his heart within was polluted with injustice, selfishness, and a corrupt disposition, which made him act unrighteously (comp. Matt. xxiii. 27). Contrary to the Law; or, *acting illegally*; *παρὰ νόμον*, only found here in the New Testament, but common in classical Greek. St. Paul's temper was very excusably roused by the brutality and injustice of Ananias. But we may, perhaps, think that he did not quite attain to "the mind that was in Christ Jesus," who "when he was reviled, reviled not again," but was "led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, he opened not his mouth" (ch. viii. 32).

Ver. 4.—*God's high priest*. This seems to show that Ananias actually was high priest, though some think that he had thrust himself into the office after his return from Rome, without due authority, and that this was the reason why St. Paul excused himself by saying, in ver. 5, "I wist not that he was high priest."

Ver. 5.—*And Paul said for then said Paul, A.V.; high for the high, A.V.; a ruler for the ruler, A.V.* I wist not, etc. These words express, as distinctly as words can express anything, that St. Paul was not aware, when he called Ananias a "whited wall," that he was addressing the high priest. Different reasons for this ignorance have been given. Some think that it arose from the uncertainty that existed whether Ananias really was high priest or not at this time, or whether the office was not in abeyance. Others attribute to Paul's weakness of sight the fact that he did not see that Ananias was sitting in the presidential chair, neither was able to recognize his features. Others, giving to *οὐκ ᾔδειν* a sense which it never has, render, "I did not reflect," or "bear in mind, that he was high priest." What is certain is that for some reason or other Paul did not know that he was speaking to the high priest. Had he known it, he would not have said what he did say, because the Law is express which says, *Ἀρχонта τοῦ λαοῦ σου οὐ κακῶς ἱρεῖς* (Exod. xxii. 28, LXX.).

Ver. 6.—*Brethren for men and brethren, A.V. (as in ver. 1); a son of Pharisees for the son of a Pharisee, A.V. and T.R.; touching for of, A.V.* When Paul perceived, etc. Possibly the Pharisees in the Sanhedrim were disgusted at the brutal act of Ananias, and were not sorry to hear him called "a whited wall;" and St. Paul's quick intelligence saw at a glance that the whole council did not sympathize with their president, and divined the cause. With a ready wit, therefore, he proclaimed himself a Pharisee, and, seizing upon the great dogma of the resurrection, which Christians held in common with the Pharisees, he rallied to his side all who were Pharisees in the assembly. Of Pharisees. The R.T. has *Φαρισαίων* (in the plural), which gives the sense that his ancestors were Pharisees (comp. Phil. iii. 5). Touching the hope, etc. (see ch. xxiv. 21). The words are somewhat difficult to construe. Some take "the hope and resurrection of the dead" for a hendiadys, equivalent to "the hope of the resurrection of the dead." Some take *ἐλπίς* by itself, as meaning "the hope of a future life." Perhaps the exact form of the words is, "Touching the hope and (its ultimate object) the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." The article is omitted after the preposition (Alford). As regards St. Paul's action in taking advantage of the strong party feeling by which the Sanhedrim was divided, there is a difference of opinion. Some, as Alford, think that the presence of mind and skill with which Paul divided the hostile assembly was a direct fulfilment of our Lord's promise (Mark xiii. 9—11; see Homiletics, 1—11) to suggest by his Spirit to those under persecution what they ought to say. Farrar, on the contrary, strongly blames St. Paul, and says, "The plan showed great knowledge of character . . . but was it worthy of St. Paul? . . . Could he worthily say, 'I am a Pharisee'? Had he any right to inflame an existing animosity?" and more to the same effect (vol. ii. pp. 325—328). But it could not be wrong for St. Paul to take advantage of the agreement of Christian doctrine with some of the tenets of the Pharisees, to check the Pharisees from joining with the Sadducees in crushing that doctrine. He had never thrown off his profession as a Jew, and if a Jew, then one of the strictest sect of the Jews, in any of its main features; and if he claimed the freedom of a Roman citizen to save himself from scourging, why not the fact of being a Pharisee of Pharisees to save himself from an iniquitous sentence of the Sanhedrim?

Ver. 7.—*Sadducees for the Sadducees, A.V.; assembly for multitude, A.V.*

Ver. 8.—Neither angel, etc. Is there any connection between this expression and that

in ch. xii. 15, "It is his angel" (see ver. 9)? For the statement regarding the Pharisees and Sadducees, see Luke xx. 27.

Ver. 9.—*Clamour for cry, A.V.; some of the for the, A.V.; of the Pharisees' part for that were of the, etc., A.V.; stood up for arose, A.V.; and what for but, A.V.; a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel for a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, A.V.;* the R.T. omits the clause in the T.R., *let us not fight against God*. The scribes (comp. Luke xx. 39). We find no evil in this man (comp. John xviii. 29, 33; Luke xxiii. 14, 15, 22). What if a spirit, etc.; alluding to what Paul had said in ch. xxii. 17, 18.

Ver. 10.—*Be torn for have been pulled, A.V.; by for of, A.V.; take for to take, A.V.; bring for to bring, A.V.* A great dissension; *σάδρευς*, as in ch. xv. 2, and above, ver. 7. The state of things here described is exactly what the pages of Josephus and of Tacitus disclose as to the combustible state of the Jewish mind generally just before the commencement of the Jewish war. The Roman power was the one element of quiet and order. The tower of Antonia was the one place of safety in Jerusalem.

Ver. 11.—The R.T. omits *Paul*, in the T.R. and A.V.; *concerning for of, A.V.; at for in, A.V.* The Lord stood by him. The jaded, harassed, and overwrought spirit needed some unusual support. The Lord whom Paul loved, and for whom he was suffering so much, knew it, and in his tender care for his servant stood by him and spake a word of gracious encouragement to him. Paul felt that he was not forgotten or forsaken. There was more work for him to do, in spite of all the hatred of his countrymen. The capital of heathendom must hear his testimony as well the metropolis of the circumcised.

Ver. 12.—*The Jews for certain of the Jews, A.V. and T.R.* Banded together (*ποιήσαντες συστροφήν*). This word *συστροφή* is found in the New Testament only here and ch. xix. 40, where it is rendered "concourse." The sense of "a conspiracy," which it has here, is common in the LXX. (see Amos vii. 10; 2 Kings xv. 15, etc.). The verb *συστρέφειν* in the LXX. has the sense of "to conspire" (2 Sam. xv. 31; 2 Kings x. 9; xv. 30, *συνέστρεψε σύσπρεμμα*). Bound themselves under a curse (*ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἑαυτοὺς*). The word *ἀνθεμα* (Rom. ix. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 3; xvi. 22, Gal. i. 8, 9) corresponds to the Hebrew *נָחַם*, the devotion of anything to destruction; and hence "the thing itself so devoted." And the verb *ἀναθεματίζω* corresponds to the Hebrew *נָחַם*, to devote to destruction, without the possibility of redemption. Here they made themselves an *ἀνθεμα* if they did not kill Paul before partaking of any food. It seems, however, that there was a way of

escape if they failed to keep the vow Lightfoot, on this passage, quotes from the Talmud: "He that hath made a vow not to eat anything, woe to him if he eat, and woe to him if he do not eat. If he eat he sinneth against his vow; if he do not eat he sinneth against his life. What must such a man do in this case? Let him go to the wise men, and they will loose his vow" ('Heb. and Talmud. Exercit. upon the Acts').

Ver. 13.—*Made for had made, A.V.* Conspiracy; *συνωμοσία*, in Latin *conjuratio*. It only occurs here in the New Testament, but is used occasionally by Diodorus Siculus and other Greek writers. The kindred word *συνωμότης* is found in the LXX. of Gen. xiv. 13, rendered "confederate," A.V.

Ver. 14.—*The elders for elders, A.V.; to taste for that we will eat, A.V.; killed for slain, A.V.* The chief priests, etc. Meaning, no doubt, those who were of the party of the Sadducees, to which the chief priests mainly belonged at this time. A great curse. There is nothing in the phraseology of this verse, as compared with that of ver. 12, to warrant the introduction of the word "great." It is simply, "We have anathematized ourselves with an anathema."

Ver. 15.—*Do ye for ye, A.V.;* the R.T. omits *to-morrow*, in the A.V.; *judge of his case more exactly for inquire something more perfectly concerning him, A.V.;* *slay for kill, A.V.* With the council. Either the temporary feeling of the Pharisees had subsided, and their old hatred come to the front again, or the high priest and Sadducees, by some plausible excuse, persuaded the Pharisees of the council to join with them in asking that Paul might be brought before them again. Signify. The word *ἐμφανίζω* only occurs here and at ver. 22, in this sense of "signifying" or "making known" something, which it has in Esth. ii. 22, LXX., Codex Alexandrinus (as the rendering of *מָנַח*, to tell), and in 2 Mac. iii. 7, and in Josephus, as also in classical Greek. Elsewhere in the New Testament it means "to manifest," or "show," as in John xiv. 21, 22; in the passive voice "to appear," as in Matt. xxvii. 53; Heb. ix. 24; and in a technical legal sense "to give information" (ch. xxiv. 1; xxv. 2, 15). Judge of his case more exactly; *διαγνώσκειν*, κ.τ.λ. The word only occurs here and in ch. xxiv. 22. The classical use of the word in the sense of "deciding," "giving judgment," is in favour of the R.V.; *διαγνώσκειν*, like *διagnosis*, diagnosis (ch. xxv. 21), is a word of very frequent use in medical writers, as is the *ἀκριβέστερον*, which here is joined with it (ch. xxiv. 22, note).

Ver. 16.—*But for and when, A.V.;* and he came for he went, A.V. Lying in wait;



*ἐνέδρα*, only here and in ch. xxv. 3 in the New Testament; but common in the Books of Joshua and Judges in the LXX., and also in classical Greek.

Ver. 17.—*And for then, A.V.; called unto him one, etc., for called one, etc., unto him, A.V.; something for a certain thing, A.V.*

Ver. 18.—*Smith for said, A.V.; asked for prayed, A.V.; to for unto, A.V.*

Ver. 19.—*And for then, A.V.; going aside asked him privately for went with him aside privately, and asked him, A.V.* Took him by the hand (*ἐπιλαβόμενος τῆς χειρὸς*); see above, ch. xvii. 19, note. The action denotes a kindly feeling towards St. Paul, as indeed his whole conduct does (comp. ch. xxiv. 23; xxvii. 3; also Dan. i. 9 and Ps. cvi. 46).

Ver. 20.—*Ask thee to bring for desire thee that thou wouldest bring, A.V.; unto for into, A.V.; thou wouldest for they would, A.V. and T.R.; more exactly concerning him for of him more perfectly, A.V.* Have agreed. *Συντίθημι* occurs four times in the New Testament, of which three are in St. Luke's writings (Luke xxii. 5; this passage; and ch. xxiv. 9), and the fourth in John ix. 22. As though thou wouldest. The R.T., which reads *μέλων* for *μέλλοντες*, must surely be wrong. It is in contradiction to ver. 15, and makes no sense. The pretext of further inquiry was theirs, not Lysias's.

Ver. 21.—*Do not thou therefore for but do not thou, A.V.; under a curse for with an oath, A.V.; neither to eat nor to drink for that they will neither eat nor drink, A.V.; slain for killed, A.V.; the for a (promise), A.V.* Do not . . . yield (*μὴ πεισθῆς*); be not persuaded by them; do not assent unto them (see Luke xvi. 6; ch. v. 40; xvii. 4, etc.). The promise, etc.; *τὴν ἀπὸ σοῦ ἐπαγγελίαν*. The word occurs above fifty times in the New Testament, and is always rendered "promise" in the A.V., except in 1 John i. 5, where it is rendered both in the A.V. and the R.V. "message," which is the literal meaning of the word. In Polybius it means "a summons." Either of these meanings suits this passage better than "promise."

Ver. 22.—*Let for then let, A.V.; go for depart, A.V.; charging for and charged, A.V.; tell for see thou tell, A.V.; signified for showed, A.V.* (see ver. 15, note). Charging (as in ch. i. 4; iv. 18; v. 28, 40, etc.).

Ver. 23.—*Of the centurions for centurions, A.V.; and said for saying, A.V.; as far as for to, A.V.* Two hundred soldiers; one hundred for each centurion; *στρατιώτας*, foot-soldiers, who alone would be under the command of the centurions. The *ἑπεί* and the *δεξιολάβοι* would be under the command perhaps of a *τουρμαρχῆς*, or decurio, captain of a turma, or squadron. Here there would seem to be two turmæ, because a turma con-

sisted of thirty-three men—here possibly of thirty-five. *Spearmen*; *δεξιολάβοι*. This word occurs nowhere else in Scripture or in any ancient Greek author. It is first found in "Theophylactus Simocatta, in the seventh century, and then again in the tenth century in Constantine Porphyrogenitus" (Meyer). It seems most probable that it was the name of some particular kind of light infantry. But it is not easy to explain the etymology. Perhaps they were a kind of skirmishers thrown out on a march to protect the flanks of an army; as Plutarch speaks of javelin-men and slingers being placed to guard, not only the rear, but also the flanks of the army on the march (Steph., 'Thesaur.,' under *οὐραγία*). "Holding or taking the right" might be the force of the compound, somewhat after the analogy of *δεξιόχειρος*, *δεξιόστῆτης*, etc.; which agrees with the explanations of Phavorinus *παράφυλακας*, and with that of Beza, "Qui alicui dextrum latus [meaning simply latus] munit." Only, instead of the improbable notion of these men being a body-guard of the tribune—which their number makes impossible—it should be understood of the troops which protect the flank of an army on the march. Other improbable explanations are that *δεξιολάβος* means the soldier to whom the right hand of prisoners was fastened, or those who grasp with the right hand their weapon, the lance or javelin. The object of Lysias in sending so large a force was to guard against the possibility of a rescue in the feverish and excited state of the Jewish mind. And no doubt one reason for sending Paul away was his dread of a Jewish riot.

Ver. 24.—*He bade them provide for provide, A.V.* (the infinitive *παραστήσαι*); *might for may, A.V.; thereon for on, A.V.* *Beasts* (*κτῆνη*); here "riding-horses," as Luke x. 34. In Rev. xviii. 13 it is applied to "cattle;" in 1 Cor. xv. 39 it means "beasts" generally. In the LXX. it is used for all kinds of beasts—cattle, sheep, beasts of burden, etc. *Beasts* is in the plural, because one or more would be required for those who guarded Paul.

Ver. 25.—*Form for manner, A.V.* After this form. Luke does not profess to give the letter *verbatim*, but merely its general tenor, which Lysias might have communicated to Paul, or which Paul might have learnt at Cæsarea.

Ver. 26.—*Greeting for sendeth greeting, A.V.* Governor; *ἡγεμών*, as ver. 24; prætor of an imperial province, as distinguished from the *ἀνθύπατος*, or proconsul, who governed the provinces which were in the patronage of the senate. Sergius Paulus (ch. xiii. 7, 8) was a proconsul, and so was Gallio (ch. xviii. 10); Pontius Pilate (Matt

xxvii. 2) and Felix were procurators, ἡγεμόνες, only in a looser sense, as the more exact name of their office was ἐπίτροπος procurator. Only, as they were appointed by the emperor, and often exercised the full functions of a legatus Cæsaris, they were called ἡγεμόνες as well as procurators. Felix, called by Tacitus, Antonius Felix ('Hist.,' v. 9), was the brother of Pallas, the freedman and favourite of Claudius. He as well as his brother Felix had originally been the slave of Antonia the mother of the Emperor Claudius; and hence the name *Antonius Felix*, or, as he was sometimes otherwise called, *Claudius Felix*. Tacitus, after mentioning that Claudius appointed as governors of Judæa sometimes knights and sometimes freedmen, adds that among the last Antonius Felix ruled this province with boundless cruelty and in the most arbitrary manner, showing by his abuse of power his servile origin. He adds that he married Drusilla, the granddaughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, so that he was Mark Antony's grandson-in-law, while Claudius was Antony's grandson. But see ch. xxiv. 24, note. In the 'Annals' (xii. 5) Tacitus further speaks of the incompetence of Felix to govern, stirring up rebellions by the means he took to repress them, and of the utter lawlessness and confusion to which the province was reduced by the maladministration of Felix and his colleague, Ventidius Cumanus ("oui pars provincie habebatur"). He adds that civil war would have broken out if Quadratus, the Governor of Syria, had not interposed, and secured the punishment of Cumanus, while Felix, his equal in guilt, was continued in his government. This was owing, no doubt, to the influence of Pallas. The same influence secured the continued government to Felix upon Nero's accession, Pallas being all-powerful with Agrippina. Such was "the most excellent governor Felix." For further accounts of him, see Josephus ('Bell. Jud.,' ii. xii. 8; xiii.), who ignores his share in the government as the partner of Cumanus, and dates his appointment subsequently to the condemnation of Cumanus at Rome, and is also there silent as to his misdeeds. (For further accounts of Felix, see 'Ant. Jud.,' xx. vii. 1, 2; viii. 5—7, which relate his adulterous marriage with Drusilla, and some of his murders and cruelties.)

Ver. 27.—*Seized by for taken of, A.V.; was about to be slain for should have been killed, A.V.; when I came for then came I, A.V.; upon them with the soldiers for with an army, A.V.; learned for understood, A.V.* The soldiers (τὸ στράτευμα, as ver. 10). The army of the A.V. is out of place. Having learned, etc. Lysias departs here from strict truth, wishing, no doubt, to set off

his zeal in defence of a Roman citizen, and also to anticipate any unfavourable report that Paul might give as to his threatened scourging.)

Ver. 28.—*Desiring to know for when I would have known, A.V.; down unto for forth into, A.V.*

Ver. 29.—*Found for perceived, A.V.; about for of, A.V.* Questions; ζητήματα, only in the Acts, where it occurs five times (ch. xv. 2; xviii. 15; xxiii. 29; xxv. 19; xxvi. 3). St. Luke also uses ζητήσις (ch. xxv. 20), as does St. Paul four times in the pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. i. 4, T.R.; vi. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 23; Titus iii. 9).

Ver. 30.—*Shown to for told, A.V.; that there would be a plot against for how that the Jews laid wait for, A.V. and T.R.; I sent him to thee forthwith for I sent straightway to thee, A.V.; charging for and gave commandment to, A.V.; to speak against him before thee for to say before thee what they had against him, A.V.; the R.T. omits farewell, in the A.V.* That there would be a plot, etc. Two constructions are mixed up either by the writer of the letter, or by the transcriber. One would be Μηνυθείσης δέ μοι ἐπιβουλῆς τῆς μελλούσης ἔσεσθαι, "When I was informed of the plot which was about to be laid against him;" the other, Μηνυθέντος μοι ἐπιβουλὴν μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι, "When I was informed that a plot was going to be laid," etc. Against the man; πρὸς αὐτόν, as ch. vi. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 1. But λέγειν πρὸς (instead of κατὰ), "to speak against" any one, is an unusual phrase. The T.R., which is retained by Mill, Alford, Wordsworth, Meyer, etc., is far more probable. Other readings are λέγειν, or λέγειν αὐτοῖς.

Ver. 31.—*So for then, A.V.* Antipatris; "forty-two Roman miles" from Jerusalem, and twenty-six from Cæsarea, built (on the site of Kaphor Saba) by Herod the Great, and named in honour of Antipater, his father" (Alford). According to Howson, following the American traveller, the Rev. Eli Smith, the route lay from Jerusalem to Gophna, on the road to Nablous, and from Gophna, leaving the great north road by a Roman road of which many distinct traces remain, to Antipatris, avoiding Lydda or Diospolis altogether. Gophna is three hours from Jerusalem, and, as they started at 9 p.m., would be reached by midnight. Five or six hours more would bring them to Anti-

<sup>1</sup> The Roman mile was equal to 1618 yards, or one hundred and forty-two yards less than the English statute mile. The distance in English miles would therefore be under thirty-nine miles. Thirteen hours' walking at three miles an hour, with six hours' halt, would bring them to Cæsarea by 4 p.m.

patris, most of the way being downhill from the hill country of Ephraim to the plain of Sharon. After a halt of two or three hours, a march of six hours would bring them to Cæsarea, which they may have reached in the afternoon.

Ver. 32.—*But on for on, A.V.* On the morrow, after their departure from Jerusalem, not, as Alford suggests, after their departure from Antipatris. It was a forced march, and therefore would not occupy two days and a night.

Ver. 33.—*And they for who, A.V. ; letter for epistle, A.V.* Presented Paul; *παρέστησαν*. This is a word particularly used of setting any one before a judge (see Rom. xiv. 10, and the subscription of 2 Timothy, "Ὅτε ἐκ δευτέρου παρέστη Παῦλος τῷ Καίσαρι Νέρωνι).

Ver. 34.—*He for the governor, A.V. and T.R. ; it for the letter, A.V.* Province; *ἐπαρχία*, only here and in ch. xxv. 1. A general word for a government, most properly applied to an imperial province.

Ver. 35.—*Thy cause for thee, A.V. ; also are for are also, A.V. ; palace for judgment hall, A.V.* I will hear thy cause; *διακούσomal σου*, found only here in the New Testament; but used in the same sense as here for "hearing a cause," in Deut. i. 16, *Διακούσατε . . . καὶ κρίνετε*, "Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously," A.V. See also Job ix. 33, *Διακούων ἀναμέσον ἀμφοτέρων*, "That might lay his hand upon us both," A.V., i.e. judge between us. Palace (*ἐν τῷ πραιτωρίῳ*). The *prætorium*—for it is a Latin word—was originally the prætor's tent in a Roman camp. Thence it came to signify the abode of the chief magistrate in a province, or a king's palace. *Herod's palace* seems to have been a palace originally built by King Herod, and now used, either as the residence of the procurator or, as the mode of speaking rather indicates, for some public office. (For the use of the word *πραιτώριον*, see Matt. xxvii. 27; John xviii. 28, 33; xix. 9; Phil. i. 13.)

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—11.—*Policy.* The characteristic quality of an Israelite indeed, as our Lord has taught us, is to be without guile. All kinds of trickery, deceit, false pretences, disguises, dissimulation, as well as downright falsehood, are entirely alien from the true Christian spirit. The man of God walks habitually in an atmosphere of transparent truth. He has nothing to conceal, nothing to simulate. He has to do with the God of truth, who searches all hearts, and from whom no secrets are hid. His one great object is to please God, and to live in all good conscience toward him. And it is a small thing with him to be judged of man's judgment. And then, as regards one fruitful source of falsehood, *fear*—fear of evil, of danger, of blame, the man of God is comparatively free from its influence, because he trusts in God, and commits the keeping of his soul to him as to a faithful Creator. God's faithfulness and truth are his shield and buckler. Hid under the shadow of his protecting wings, he is safe. Even in the valley of the shadow of death he fears no evil, because God is with him. His only fear is lest he forfeit that omnipotent protection by conduct displeasing to God and unworthy of a Christian man. But is the man of God therefore to take no steps to secure his own safety? is he to use no sagacity, no wisdom, no prudence, to follow no line of good policy, by which danger may be avoided, and the enemies who seek to hurt him may be baffled and eluded? Surely this cannot be affirmed except on principles of fatalism, which equally preclude the taking of any steps towards the accomplishment of any end. To act wisely and discreetly, to take advantage of circumstances and opportunities as they arise, to bring about good results, and to avert evil ones, is as much the duty of a Christian as to sow in order that he may reap, or to take medicine in order that he may be healed. In the case before us, St. Paul was in imminent danger of being condemned by unrighteous judges. He saw that their passions and their prejudices were inflamed against him, and that his own integrity was no security against an unjust sentence. But he saw also that, though for the moment his judges were incited by their common hatred towards himself, there were strong elements of discord among them. He saw that on one of the leading truths of that gospel which he preached—the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting beyond the grave—the division between his enemies was at its height, and a large portion of his judges were on his side. It was therefore an act, not of guile or deceit, but of sagacity and policy, to take advantage of this circumstance, and to divide his opponents, and, under cover of their division, to save himself. And he did so with signal success. In doing so he



has added one to many other examples, that the safety of the righteous lies in the disunion of sinners. It may be added that the vision, with its message, in ver. 11, does not look as if St. Paul had sullied his bright conscience by any unworthy shifts when he stood before the council.

**Vers. 12—35.—*Special providence.*** It is difficult to define exactly what we mean by a *special providence*. Not one sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father, who works *all things* after the counsel of his own will, and makes all things “work together for good to them that love him, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. viii. 28). And yet there are times and occasions when the overruling and controlling hand of God is seen more clearly and more markedly than usual, and when the interposition of human will and intention is more conspicuously absent. And perhaps this is what we mean when we speak of a *special providence*. Let us mark some of the circumstances detailed in this section, which seem to bring St. Paul’s escape from the Jews at this time under the category of a *special providence*. The danger was great and imminent. In the feverish excited state of the Jewish mind at this time, and when they were unable, through their weakness, to give effect to their intense hatred of their heathen masters, they were all the more ready to wreak their vengeance upon any more helpless victim who might fall into their hands. Such a victim was St. Paul; and already in the temple court and on the castle stairs, he had nearly forfeited his life to their violence. Again, in the council-chamber he was on the point of being torn in pieces by them. The danger, therefore, was very great which he had already escaped. But a greater was at hand. More than forty Jews, in whom guile, hatred, and fanaticism were a triple cord not easily to be broken, bound themselves together by a terrible curse to “remove” that obnoxious life, and seemed to make their own lives dependent upon the fulfilment of their atrocious vow. It was nearly certain that a request, coming to Lysias from the chief officers of the Sanhedrim, to bring Paul down again for some further inquiry into his case, would be complied with, and, if so, his death was certain also. Now mark the providential circumstances by which this plot was defeated. Paul had a sister, and this sister had a son. We hear nothing and know nothing of either of these persons except on this critical occasion. Where the young man lived, how he happened to be at Jerusalem (unless it were to keep the Feast of Pentecost), whether he had been influenced by his uncle to embrace the Christian faith, or whether, as seems more probable, he was a zealous Jew, and as such entrusted with the secrets of the party, we know not. All we know is that he became acquainted with the conspiracy, and went immediately to the castle to inform Paul of it. His ready admission to the prisoner, the good-natured compliance of the centurion with Paul’s request to him to bring the young man to the chief captain, the chief captain’s courteous attention to the young man’s tale, and his instant determination to send Paul off by night to Cæsarea, were the further links, each absolutely necessary, in the chain of providence, by which Paul’s escape was accomplished. But one other circumstance must be noted. It seems strange at first sight that the tribune of the Roman garrison should take so much trouble about one poor Jew, whom, moreover, he had only to keep a close prisoner in the castle to ensure his safety. But we have a ready explanation of this in Lysias’s own letter, and in what happened the day before, as recorded in ch. xxii. 24—26. Lysias, not a Roman by birth, had committed a grave mistake in threatening Paul, a Roman citizen, with scourging. Such a mistake might have had grave consequences to himself. He therefore adroitly and promptly took a step to show his respect and reverence for the dignity of a Roman citizen, and also for the office of the Roman procurator, by sending Paul off to Cæsarea. At the same time, by so doing he avoided the chance of a riot at Jerusalem, and threw the whole responsibility of dealing with Paul and his Jewish enemies upon Felix. Nothing could be more politic. What, however, it is to our purpose to observe is that, by this tangled tissue of motives and interests, and by this accidental combination of circumstances, God’s gracious purpose was brought about which he had announced to Paul in a vision of the night, saying, “Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast borne witness of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” The violence of the Sanhedrim (though they knew it not); the conspiracy of the Jews (though they knew it not); the courtesy and policy of Lysias (though he knew it not); as afterwards the intrigues

of Felix, the weakness of Festus, and the urgent malice of the Jews,—were all necessary steps, moving in a direction that they little suspected, for bringing the apostle of the Gentiles to the capital of the Gentile world.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1.**—“*Good conscience before God.*” Those first words of Paul’s defence, which so greatly excited and angered the high priest, are capable of being taken in more senses than one. We may regard them in—

**I. THE SENSE IN WHICH THEY MUST BE FALSE.** It is certain that Paul did not intend to say that he had never been conscious of defect and guilt in his relation to God. The time had been when he might have said so. As a scrupulous Pharisee, who was, “touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless,” he would consider himself without any reason for remorse. But “what things were gain to him,” those he “counted loss for Christ” (Phil. iii. 7). He had come to the conclusion that the “way of peace” was not by faultlessness, but by forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; he had sought and found “the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. iii. 9). And there is no living man who can look back upon all that he has said and done, and look in on all that he has been, and declare that he is conscious of no defect and no guiltiness before God,—except, indeed, he is one whom sin has blinded, and who does not know how “poor, and blind, and naked” he is, in the sight of absolute purity. Comparing our conduct and examining our hearts in the light of God’s “exceeding broad commandment,” we are all included under sin. We have all to acknowledge much in the matter of *positive transgression*, and far more in that of *unfulfilled obligation*.

**II. THE SENSE IN WHICH THIS MAY BE TRUE OF US ALL.** It was true of Paul in this respect, that from the beginning of his Jewish course up to the time when he became a Christian, he had acted in accordance with his convictions; that his change of view was purely conscientious; and that from the beginning of his Christian career till that day he had steadfastly pursued the path in which God had directed him to walk. Every Christian man ought to be able to affirm this of himself, having regard to his entire Christian course. This conscious spiritual integrity: 1. Includes a sense of continued reconciliation and fellowship with God. 2. Includes unbroken uprightness of conduct, freedom from presumptuous and scandalous sin, and general conformity to the will of God in all the relations of life. 3. Admits of many failures and infirmities, which are acknowledged and resisted. 4. Results from that gracious influence from heaven which attends the waiting upon God (Ps. i. 2, 3; Isa. xl. 31).

**III. THE FULLEST SENSE IN WHICH THEY CAN BE TRUE OF ANY ONE.** Paul may have been able to use these words of every period of his life; but they can only be applied to the earlier part *with a reservation*. He could only feel that he had been honestly and earnestly pursuing a mistaken course during those years. Happy are they who, when the end arrives, are able to look back on a whole life devoted to truth, to heavenly wisdom, to holy usefulness; who, from childhood to old age, have spent their powers in the service of Christ. These have not to set off one part of their career against another part, but can rejoice to feel that, from the beginning “until this day,” they have, in the fullest sense, “lived in all good conscience before God.” Here is an argument (1) for beginning at the earliest point; (2) for continuing through the special temptations of mid-life; (3) for persisting through the infirmities of later years, in the beauty of a holy Christian life, in the excellency of earnest work.—C.

**Vers. 3—10.**—*Things dubious and things certain.* There are few passages of Scripture in which there are so many doubtful points in a small space.

**I. THREE DOUBTFUL POINTS.** It is uncertain: 1. What Paul meant by his apologetic remark (ver. 5; see Exposition). 2. Whether he was justified in administering such a scathing rebuke, “God shall smite thee,” etc. It certainly looks much like the utterance of a man who for the moment has lost his self-control, and there seems to be ground for contrasting it with the calm dignity of the Master when he was smitten (John xviii. 22, 23). The apostle laid no claim to perfection (Phil. iii. 13; “perfect,” in Phil. iii. 15, signifies *mature*, instructed, disciplined), and he may well have been

provoked, at this time, into a resentment which he afterwards wished he had been able to master. 3. Whether he was right in classing himself with the Pharisaic party (ver. 6). Though with them in those respects in which they differed from the Sadducees, and though, therefore, his words were formally correct, his spirit was so different from theirs, his principles were so opposite to theirs, his energies were so spent in combating theirs, that there was (or at least seems to have been) more of falsity than truth in his declaration. It is always a doubtful thing to say under pressure what we should never dream of saying under ordinary circumstances. But we may look at—

II. THREE CERTAIN TRUTHS. It is certain: 1. That only intrinsic worth can long hold the honour of our fellow-men. If Paul was ready, as he was, to pay outward deference to "God's high priest" (ver. 4); if he was unwilling to "speak evil of the ruler of the people" (ver. 5); he certainly held in small honour the particular high priest then presiding. Kings, judges, statesmen, ministers, may enjoy a temporary deference and an outward tribute as public officers; but if they are corrupt, if they are self-seeking, if they are indulgent, they will soon sink into dishonour and even into contempt. Only the worthy will continue to enjoy the esteem of their kind. Possibly a few of the shrewdest and most cunning have carried their honours to the grave, though they have deserved public reprobation, but these have passed to a scene where the veil will be torn off, and the long-outstanding penalty be required; but these are the few and not the many. Usually the pretender is unmasked here, and the iron hand of indignation comes down on the guilty head. 2. That it is an honourable and excellent thing to explain or apologize when one or the other is demanded. (1) It is the *right* thing; it is due to those who have been misled or injured. (2) It is the *manly* thing; it requires more courage, and courage of a higher order, to withdraw with expressions of regret than to maintain with the appearance of rectitude. (3) It is the *Christian* thing; though, indeed, our Lord needed not to do this himself, yet we are sure it is in perfect accordance with his will: "If thy brother sin against thee, and he repent, forgive him," etc. (4) It is the *peaceful* thing; to defend one's position is to foment strife; to acknowledge error is to disarm resentment and promote peace. 3. That straightforwardness is the best course to pursue. It is very doubtful whether Paul gained anything by his adoption of this expedient; he was in the greatest danger of being "pulled in pieces" (ver. 10). Such expediency as that which he employed may sometimes be rewarded by a temporary success. But the deepest and the longest success is the reward of sincerity and unswerving truth: the *deepest*, because our own self-respect is preserved inviolate and our integrity strengthened; the *longest*, for that which is founded on truth is built upon a rock, and is likeliest to endure.—C.

Vers. 11—24.—*The powers that act on us from without.* Manifold are the powers which are acting upon our spirit and deciding our course and destiny. Some of these are suggested by this narrative.

I. THE MALEVOLENT HUMAN. (Vers. 12—15.) In this case human malevolence took a very violent and malignant form: it sought to compass Paul's death by a dark and shameless stratagem. More often it seeks to do us injury for which we shall suffer, but from which we may recover. The very worst form which it assumes is that of aiming at our spiritual integrity, leading us into sin and so into shame and death.

II. THE INDIFFERENT HUMAN. (Vers. 18—24.) The Roman—centurion, chief captain, soldier—took no special interest in Paul, and had no prejudice against him. He regarded the whole matter in a professional light, and acted in simple and strict accordance with his habits of obedience and command. Around us is human law, human custom, human society—with this we must lay our account. It will proceed on its usual course, like a train upon the lines laid down for it, with small concern for our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows. If we take heed, we may avail ourselves of its help; if we are indiscreet, it will dash against us un pityingly. So far as we *may* do so and *can* do so, we must order ourselves so as to benefit by its strong force.

III. THE BENIGNANT HUMAN. (Vers. 16—21.) Paul's sister induced her son to interpose, and the young man (or, youth) played his delicate and dangerous part well, intervening between these sanguinary schemers and their illustrious victim. We may hope for positive sympathy and active aid from (1) those who are closely and tenderly related to us; (2) those who are young, and therefore open to many admirable inspira-



tions (obedience, pity, courage, aspiration, etc.); (3) those who have spiritual affinities with us, to whom we are brethren or fathers "in the Lord."

IV. THE DIVINE. (Ver. 16.) At this troublous and anxious time, when Paul was cut off from fellowship with the disciples, the Master himself drew near to him. He came with his comforting presence and his cheering word. He did not fail his servant then; nor will he fail his faithful followers now. We may reckon upon (1) his comforting presence with us; (2) his word of promise and cheer; (3) his summons to bear witness in the future as in the past: "As thou hast testified . . . so must thou," etc. While all these powers are acting upon us, we must *play our own part manfully*, or the issue will be unfavourable (ver. 17). When all is done for or against us, we must make our own choice, decide for ourselves which of the two paths we will pursue, at which gate we shall be found when the journey of life is over (Gal. vi. 4, 5).—C.

Vers. 12—35.—*Paul at Cæsarea.* I. "THE LORD IS MINDFUL OF HIS OWN." Recall the beautiful song in Mendelssohn's 'St. Paul.' 1. *The craft of their foes.* They conspire against the righteous with a zeal worthy of a better cause (vers. 12, 13); and cloke their designs under pious pretexts (vers. 14, 15). 2. *The Divine protection.* He brings the counsels of wickedness to light (ver. 16). The young man, whoever he was, Christian or otherwise, became, in Divine providence, a guardian angel of the apostle.

"Nothing so fine is spun,  
But comes to light beneath the sun,"

to the help of the good and the confusion of the wicked (cf. Ps. vii. 15; xxxiv. 8). Sincerity and good faith are found where they are least expected, when God is guiding the hearts of men (ver. 18).

II. THE GRACIOUS DELIVERANCE. (Vers. 23—35.) 1. They are withdrawn from the snares of their foes. Paul, surrounded by the military guard, seems a visible picture of the angels of God encamping about those who fear him. "Against forty bandits he sends five hundred protectors." 2. Testimony to the truth is furnished on their behalf (ver. 27, etc.). The honourable and straightforward dealing of the heathen Romans stands in contrast to that of the orthodox Jews. Better have the spirit of the Law without the letter than the letter without the spirit. The very indifferentism of the Romans becomes overruled for the deliverance of Paul. Guarded in the palace of Herod, Paul has time for reflection and prayer. The intervals of arduous labour, the moments of respite from toil and conflict,—in these we may find proofs of the nearness and tenderness of God.—J.

Vers. 1—10.—*Paul before the Sanhedrim.* I. A SUGGESTIVE CONTRAST between corrupt ecclesiasticism and secular power. The bigotry, intolerance, personal animosity, unfairness, fanatical cruelty, all finding abundant confirmation in the history of the persecutions emanating from the papacy. Lysias was cruel because he was reckless and followed bad customs, but Ananias was cruel because he was spiteful and tyrannical.

II. THE MASTER'S PREDICTION FULFILLED. Such a scene was what the servants of Christ were told to prepare for. The apostle's infirmity, compared with the Saviour's perfect self-possession and patience, shows that the highest of merely human characters fall far below the Divine goodness in Christ. Yet the instant apology, so courteously expressed, shows that the ruffle was only on the surface. The mistake was a natural one, and the provocation was great.

III. THE CORRUPTION OF JUDAISM EXHIBITED. Whether Paul acted blamelessly in appealing to Pharisees against Sadducees may be an open question, but, as he was brought before the highest religious authority of Judaism, and the Jews of that time rejected the reformation which Christianity in the person of Paul presented to them, it was a challenge to Jewish orthodoxy to vindicate itself if it could. And all the apostle probably meant was that he had been brought up in the orthodox school, and that Christianity was no heresy to the substance of Jewish teaching. The discussion which followed revealed the utter decay of Judaism. The heart of it was eaten out with scepticism and pride. The orthodox had no moral influence. The heterodox were powerful enough to fight successfully their battle against the rulers, which was another

proof, like the crucifixion of Jesus, that the Jewish state was ripe for judgment. The Messiahship of Christ rested on the facts of the Resurrection.

IV. THE HOLLOW HYPOCRISY OF UNBELIEF. The Sadducees were not open to conviction. Nor are unbelievers generally. Their professed love of truth is sincere. They will inquire in order to decry, but not to reach a conclusion contrary to their inclinations. No dogmatists are so bigoted and so tyrannical as the dogmatists of the Sadducean school. As in Paul's time, so still, worldly influence is called in to help unbelief. The Sadducees were the wealthy party. There was a root of faith in the Pharisaic school, but it was being destroyed by worldliness, and they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Had the Sadducees been willing to hear Paul, they might have been convinced of their own error. Had the Pharisees not hoped for victory over their antagonists more than for light, the council might have been held.—R.

Ver. 3.—*The human judge in the presence of the Divine.* "Sittest thou to judge me," etc.? (see celebrated sermon by Rev. Sydney Smith, preached at York, March 28, 1824).

I. The law of man rests on the Law of God. 1. In its aims. 2. In its execution. II. The blessing of a faithfully kept and righteously administered system of justice, which, notwithstanding all human infirmities, can be maintained.

III. The bar of human law both a prediction and an evidence of the future judgment. Yet the imperfections of earthly justice remind us that God shall make up all inequalities, and show hereafter perfectly that all justice is love.

IV. The corruption of Jewish Law proved the necessity of a better law, the law of Christ, which is not a despotic law, but "peace, and righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" not smiting our neighbour, but "bearing one another's burdens."—R.

Ver. 11.—*Light in the darkness.* "And the night following," etc. Review the position of the apostle. In prison. Hated by the Jews. Only rescued by a heathen hand, which itself may be turned against him. Perplexed by his own thoughts (cf. Elijah in the cave at Mount Horeb). Conflict of fears and desires—his hope to do greater things, his desire to see Rome; his sense of a great vocation as the leading missionary; his apparent helplessness among his enemies. The vision had a twofold purpose—to prepare the apostle for its work, to give encouragement to all who resembled him in single-heartedness and spiritual heroism.

I. THE ASSURANCE GIVEN. 1. *The strengthening of faith* in the personal Redeemer. His resurrection; his sympathy; his approval of the apostle's life; the progress of his kingdom. 2. *The certainty conveyed* that all that would occur in Jerusalem would be overruled for good. 3. *The prospect held out* corresponding to the apostle's own aims and desires, that Rome would be visited—a prospect which emboldened him to appeal to Cæsar, although it might lead to greater sufferings eventually.

II. THE LESSON TAUGHT. 1. In the darkest night *the appearance of Jesus* is new strength. 2. Faithful and heroic work is never left without *encouragement*. 3. Though visions of the night may not be granted to the Church now, except on very rare occasions, still there are *foresights of the future* which can be obtained by deep insight, prayerful vigilance, elevated faith and study of events in the light of the Saviour's words, and the facts of his past intercourse with his disciples. 4. *Holy ambition* is accompanied with the spirit of apostolic self-devotion, and is rewarded with the accomplishment of our desires. "Expect great things; attempt great things." Why not aim at Rome? James and John were not reproved by Christ for desiring a place beside him, but were reminded that they must purge all such desires of the sordid and selfish, and be prepared for the baptism of blood. If we take up the cross, we may sit with Jesus on the throne. 5. The highest description of a Christian's life is "bearing witness." Christ is all and in all. We reflect his light. Even at Rome a simple testimony is enough.—R.

Vers. 12—35.—*Conspiracy defeated.* The "must" of the Lord's midnight message interpreted by events. Divine providence working. The Christian stands still and sees the salvation. The Word of God is instead of human calculations and predictions.

How different from fatalism! Such a case as Livingstone in the dangers of his African mission reminds us that there is a feeling of confidence in our weakness which is like a vision in the night. Notice—

I. THE GUILT OF FANATICISM. The forty conspirators thought that they were doing God service. They divulged the oath to the chief priests and elders. It was, by their silence, appropriated as the deed of the whole Sanhedrim. The blindness of their passion secured its owl defeat.

II. THE DIVINE INTERPOSITION TO PROTECT. The sister of Paul probably not a Christian. The boy attached to his uncle, showing the affectionate nature of the apostle. A weak instrument chosen of God to accomplish a great work. The soldierly feeling of the captain aroused, and his sympathy with a fellow-citizen of Rome. Human agents controlled and directed by Divine influences.

III. ROMAN DESPATCH AND DISCIPLINE called, again, into the service of the gospel. The promise of the Lord was being fulfilled, though in a way unanticipated by Paul. Cæsarea revisited under very different circumstances. The lonely, persecuted Jew becoming important. Felix put on his mettle. The contrast between the two worlds—the world of Judaism and the world of imperialism. The prisoner going to Cæsarea suggests what is wanted to deliver mankind from both—the cruelty of fanatics and the cruelty of despots and military ambition. The simplicity, heroism, all-conquering love of the Christian ambassador. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” It was a significant change from Lysias’s fortress at Jerusalem to Herod’s palace at Cæsarea. The gospel was challenging the world.—R.

Vers. 1—5.—*A threefold example of true greatness.* Every careful reader of the Testament is aware that there is obscurity present to a certain degree in this passage. The obscurity is of a nature not very likely to yield to timid treatment. It does not seem likely that there remain facts of history which would clear it up, for instance. Rather would it seem the preferable course to face at once the difficulty, to narrow its dimensions to the smallest compass, and to admit that it is not evident how it was that Paul failed to know the thing that he said he did not know—whether this were that Ananias was the high priest, or whether it were that it was Ananias who uttered the command to smite him on the mouth. For this is one among many instances of the sort of difficulty that offers no impossibility of reaching a very feasible explanation, but only perplexity and uncertainty, as to which among several may have been the actual explanation. All, however, that is now incumbent on ourselves is to accept in all good faith Paul’s statement, and the lessons which may be suggested by what is before us will not be prejudiced. We have in the passage a threefold exemplification of the greatness that is open even to human character and life.

I. THE GREATNESS OF A GREAT IDEA AND RULE OF LIFE. There is no reason to think that Paul said what exceeded in the least degree the facts. 1. He owned to a conscience. 2. He owned to the principle that conscience ought to be accepted as guide. 3. He owned to the duty of accepting the governance of that conscience in things great and small—in “all things.” 4. He glanced, to say the least, and very significantly, at the fact that conscience, too, had its Superior, its Master, its Judge—the living “God” himself. A life led through the length of its intelligent period in obedience to conscience is a life that will have steadiness, consistency, strength, about it. Equally noticeable is it that human greatness, where it may most really touch the mark, will own, as it did notably in the case of Saul, to much mixture of imperfection, to much possibility of error, to grand oversights, even if conscience be its guide, unless that conscience is informed, is divinely informed, and is refreshed by the light of the Spirit of all true guiding.

II. THE GREATNESS THAT CANNOT PROVE STOICAL WHEN MORAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE AT STAKE. 1. Paul feels an intense scorn of the thing that Ananias does. 2. Though by exposing it, and trenchantly, in the face of open court, he exposed *himself* also to have it thought and said that personal resentment partly accounts for his conduct, yet Paul was content to run the risk of this. Many do now think that the conduct of Paul and his language here contrast unfavourably with what *might* have been, and detract something from the force of his righteous indignation on a righteous occasion. There is, however, such a thing as a noble disregard of fair fame, that a purer offering



may be made to one thing—the fair fame of truth. Nor do we think that anything less than this is the truth here of Paul. If his utterance were the result of personal resentment simply, it certainly could not have had the remotest chance of *working well* for him personally. If the utterance were the child of personal resentment exclusively, the suppression of it would have been the suppression of an actual and legitimate instinct. But there is no evidence of this, nor even looking this way. For (1) Paul's remonstrance is worded so as to exhibit the insult done to righteousness, not to himself. And (2) not only is there not a trace of *temper*, but there is abundant indication immediately succeeding that Paul had himself under perfect control. 3. Paul expresses no wish for the punishment of Ananias, but he firmly declares the abundantly likely retribution of God. He certainly leaves his own case in the hands of him to whom "judgment belongeth." And his language is no bitter retort, invective, or imprecation. It is no sign of either humility or greatness to hide out of sight our own strong convictions or our strong faith in God's moral government, just because the instance in question may arise in our own history. Therefore, while on the one hand the *actual words* employed by Paul receive unimpeachable justification from those of Jesus himself (Matt. xxiii. 27), the spirit he manifested does not expose itself to censure in comparison with even that of Jesus (John xviii. 22, 23), for the simple reason that it does not offer to come into comparison with it, the occasions having their material points of difference as well as of resemblance. The wonderful and divinest meekness of Jesus is indeed ever imitable, but it does not follow that every possible occasion of meekness is a right occasion for it. It may be that stern duty shall allow no option, and its more painful behest be the word of crushing rebuke (as here) rather than the tones of mercy and meekness.

III. THE GREATNESS THAT WAITS, READY TO ADMIT THAT A THING DONE BY ONE'S SELF MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETTER LEFT UNDONE. There are many things that may aggravate or diminish the blame of error. Rare as they are, there are such things as genuine explanations of error, which leave no fault with the person who nevertheless has been the perpetrator of it. Possibly Paul may be justly credited with some blame in not knowing to whom he spoke before he spoke, just as the language which he used may possibly be liable to some censure. But, anyway, the occasion is a fit one to remind us of these things: 1. That it is one sign of a great disposition—other things being equal—to be open to acknowledge error. 2. That this is a much more effectual sign, when all the circumstances of an occasion (as now) make the admission one of peculiar difficulty. 3. That worth is added to any such acknowledgment when, after all, the error is one in manner only, and emphatically not in matter, and when it lies in the *accidents* rather than in the *merits* of the subject. Though it were only *such* an error, Paul publicly admits it, and quotes chapter and verse, as it were, to his own disadvantage. 4. That this virtue is especially the growth of Christian teaching, Christian principles. The germ of this virtue so rare lies in the truth, the sincerity, the purity to which Christianity invites our supreme homage.—B.

Ver. 6.—*The hope of the living and the resurrection of the dead.* "The hope and resurrection of the dead." The chapter in which these words are found offers a striking illustration of the irresistible force of providence, or of providence and the direct acts of the Spirit in co-operation. The day was dark for Paul, nor did there seem a glimmer of hope of any justice for him at the hands of the council before whom he stood. But words and wisdom were found either by him or for him. Those words of wisdom were the weighty words of the text. The mere utterance of them rent the council in twain; soon compelled the chief captain to come again to the rescue, in place of shirking his duty, as by a side move he had wished to do; left an enraged populace no chance, as they thought, of disposing of Paul except by a murderous conspiracy; necessitated the removal of Paul by the governor under a sufficient military escort to another place and another court of trial, which in its turn led on directly to Paul's appeal to Cæsar and arrival in the capital of the world. And weighty indeed were those words—words which may be numbered as two; for they were weighted with the solemn meaning and inscrutable mystery of a whole world. They touch all that is deepest in questions between God and man. They hold, in fact, the one question that lies hidden down in some of its aspects in mystery unfathomably deep. Notice, then—

I. **THE HOPE HERE INTENDED.** The expression may mean simply "the hope of Israel" (ch. xxvi. 6—8; xxviii. 20). But if it *do* mean this, it is instanced as having for its chief implication the revelation of immortality in and by Jesus. Or it may mean more specifically Israel's "hope in and for the resurrection of the dead," though for obvious reasons Paul omits the word "Israel"—a wider resurrection than that of Israel merely being deep in his heart (ch. xxiv. 15). The expression *says* "the hope," either absolutely or "*of the dead.*" The ambiguity of expression is immaterial, because there is none of meaning. And grand indeed are the suggestions that come of the language employed. 1. "The hope" must be universal. The laborious and far-fetched exceptions that possibly might be produced would be infinitely insignificant, and might be accounted for in, perhaps, every case by moral reasons, though the most disastrous. 2. "The hope" must be of the very chiefest that can stir human hearts. 3. "The hope" carries in it the highest argument and testimony of the Creator of those hearts. 4. "The hope" must determine the great leading tracks of our thoughts of God and thoughts toward him. If he is only our God up to the grave, the greatest feeders of human regard, awe, devotion, are ruthlessly cut off at one stroke. Wonder because of him, fear toward him, love for him, wither away rootless and profitless. According as we find ground for this hope or were to fail to find it, our notions of God must be trustful or doubting, loving or callous, aspiring or ruinously baffled, and our own life rearing itself to air and light or cruelly beaten down to earth. Yes, *the hope* of universal man, his deepest hope, his last hope, his highest kind of hope, his most governing hope, is the hope that those called "the dead" are not dead, but that they "all live." For "the dead" the living hope this, and they hope it for themselves, ere they, too, shall be numbered among that number. Upon the basis of this hope rises the superstructure of our leading views of God, as of our forecasts of self.

II. **THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD HERE SPOKEN OF.** The resurrection of the dead (in the sense of the resurrection in any tenable philosophical sense of the body) is, beyond doubt, the specific revelation of Christianity. The Christian revelation of the resurrection of the body avails: 1. To guide human thoughts as to the *method* of the transition from mortality to immortality. Whatever may be the facts as to the disembodied and intermediate state, the resurrection of the body sufficiently *fixes* for us the form of the immortal life, and gives definiteness to our conception of it. 2. This revealed *method* evidently guarantees the maintenance of individuality in the immortal life. 3. For quite similar reason it postulates the continuous identity of the individual. 4. It surely infers the responsibility of the individual. No one for one moment contends for human responsibility or for human irresponsibility in this poor lower life. That those who have known it for the years of life's brief span should ignore it, at the first moment when its commanding character would receive forcible illustration, is incredible. 5. The resurrection of the dead indefinitely enlarges the entire character of man. Were the truth now conceivably subtracted from the wealth of truth which is our present possession, it would condemn us to a poverty of distressing misery. No more appalling type of the truncated could be found the world around. When Paul introduced with powerful voice and distinctest of utterance this twofold expression of the grandest and the most fundamental fact of human nature, he threw, doubtless, the apple of discord into the midst of Pharisees and Sadducees, and he did it designedly. But he was gaining a hearing for the truth that carries humanity's highest outlook in it. He was making a fresh appeal to all that is greatest and deepest in human nature. He was reminding a hardened multitude of what should most raise them and endear the Christ who came from God to them. And he was preaching to them, not what could be construed into "a hard saying," but what was fitted to be perennial inspiration. Let us see to it that it may be to us what it should have been, but was not, to them.—B.

Ver. 11.—*The sympathizing and mindful Master.* We may justly suppose that, after the life, activity, and intense excitement of that day, a reaction set in for Paul with the time of darkness and enforced rest. Those who toil for their Lord all day will not find themselves forgotten in their night of darkness, of uncertainty, of trouble. The comfort of Jesus is in this night brought to Paul. And the way in which it was brought to him must have been most grateful. That comfort offered itself in several degrees.

**I. THE LORD HIMSELF APPEARS.** What an honour! What a kindness! What a comfort!

**II. THE LORD HIMSELF "STANDS BY" PAUL.** What a condescension! What a really *brotherly* helping!

**III. THE LORD HIMSELF SPEAKS WORDS OF GOOD CHEER.** What a help for Paul, *that* voice! He had known different tones of voice of Jesus. What a gracious variety, this! What a close suggestion also of the faithful watching of the Lord over his faithful servant! He "had seen," he "had seen" the sorrowing, wearied, grieved spirit of Paul, and had come to stay his affliction by the direct exhortation, "Be of good cheer."

**IV. THE LORD UTTERS A KINDLY SUGGESTION, BETOKENING KINDLY REMEMBRANCE OF PAUL'S PAST WITNESS AT JERUSALEM, THOUGH IT WAS EVEN HE WHO HAD PEREMPTORILY CUT IT SHORT, AND HAD SAID, "DEPART!"**

**V. THE LORD ASSURES HIM OF DISTINGUISHED FUTURE SERVICE FOR HIM.** 1. This will put to flight all cares and anxieties as to the result of this trial, as to the fear of assassination, as to the uncertainty of his future career on earth. 2. It puts to flight all self-reproaching fears as to whether, "for his unworthiness," he was now to be cast aside. No; he is still a vessel meet for the Master's use—a weapon, polished, and not to be cast aside or laid aside.

**VI. THE LORD MAKES A VERY SELECTION OF WORDS THAT CARRY COMFORT AND STRENGTH WITH THEM.** "Thou *must* bear witness also at Rome." His Lord needs *him* and relies on *him*. And says he can depend on *him* who had done his work so well "in Jerusalem."—B.

Ver. 1.—*A good conscience.* Joubert says, "The trick of personifying words is a fatal source of mischief in theology." The personifying has been mischievously applied to the word "conscience," and we make it into a kind of separate being, by whom, apart from our own judgment and will, our conduct is regulated. Having in mind the descent of Minerva, in the form of an aged man, to accompany young Telemachus in the search for his father, we speak of "conscience" as an inward Mentor. The philosophical questions that arise concerning the nature and testimony of conscience may be briefly referred to, especially these two: (1) Is conscience a separate and independent power? or (2) Is conscience our faculty of judgment exercised concerning our own actions? We approve of the second view, and regard it as "the secret judgment of the soul, which gives its approbation to actions that it thinks good, or reproaches itself with those which it believes to be evil." Here, in our text, St. Paul is not thinking of the absolute right and wrong, but of the ceremonial claims which rested on a pious Jew, and says that, in relation to the formal rules of his religion, he had a "good conscience," "a conscience void of offence," a sense of having always striven to be loyal and faithful. The word "good" is a general word, and we may understand St. Paul better if we try to see what it may be regarded as including.

**I. AN ENLIGHTENED CONSCIENCE.** For, apart from the bare distinction of the absolute right and absolute wrong, conscience must be dependent on knowledge. All its finer and more precise testimonies come out of its culture. Our advances in education and moral training involve the quickening and enlightening of the conscience. The advanced man finds it altogether a more subtle guard of his life and conduct. It becomes keenly sensitive to the "beautiful" and the "becoming," as well as to the "right." This is illustrated in the case of the apostle himself; at one time "he verily thought within himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth." With the letters in his hand authorizing the persecutions of the Damascene Christians, his unenlightened conscience made no testimony of his wrongness, and offered no reproaches. By-and-by, when the revelation of the Messiahship of Jesus came to his understanding and heart, then conscience smote him, and he felt the exceeding shame of his past doings. It may be shown that all which cultures a man quickens and sensitizes conscience; but the greatest enlightener is the personal reception of Christ as our Saviour. Then we begin to see *ourselves*, and to make the true estimate of conduct, spirit, and life. If we are responsible for making the best of our opportunities for self-culture, we may be said to be also responsible for the measure of *enlightenment* of our conscience.

**II. A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.** By which qualifying term we may mean: 1. One that can



make decisions and testimonies in a firm, decided way, with no uncertainties or doubts, no "maybe" or "perhaps." Conduct is greatly dependent on prompt, clear decisions of the judgment, and these follow simple witness of the conscience to the right and wrong, the true and the beautiful. 2. The term "clear" may mean free from the deteriorating influence of bad principles and fixed evil habits. A man may so live that his conscience has always a thick, foul atmosphere to speak through, and gets sadly defiled thereby. A man may come even to read his conscience in the light of his inclinations. "Keep conscience as the noon-tide clear."

III. AN APPROVING CONSCIENCE. One that commended his actions. It is well when the constant witness of conscience is favourable. He lives a hard life who knows the daily conflict of conduct and conscience. There can be no peace until the conscience may be quiet, or only give its approvals. Precisely the result of our gaining peace with God is our gaining peace with ourselves. Our wills regenerated, we are no longer disposed to resist the leadings of our conscience.

In speaking of this subject we should remember that conscience "is not an infallible guide, but requires illumination, and therefore each man needs to pray for light; but it is never right to act against its dictates."—R. T.

Ver. 3.—*Passion under insult.* We may at once say that, though much excuse may be found for St. Paul, he was quite below the Christian standard in making such an answer to the official. He was certainly far below his Divine Master, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously." A probable explanation of St. Paul's failure to recognize the high priest is given by Michaelis: "Soon after the holding of the first council at Jerusalem, Ananias, son of Nebedæus, was deprived of the high priest's office for certain acts of violence, and sent to Rome, whence he was afterwards released, and returned to Jerusalem. Between the death of Jonathan, who succeeded him and who was murdered by Felix, and the high priesthood of Ismael, who was invested with this office by Agrippa, an interval elapsed in which this dignity was vacant. This was at the time when Paul was apprehended, and the Sanhedrim, being destitute of a president, Ananias undertook the office. It is probable that Paul was ignorant of this circumstance." The incident may suggest to us—

I. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF INDIGNATION. Distinguish between "anger," which is generally used for quick passionate temper, often both unreasoning and unreasonable, and "indignation," which is the proper uprising of our nature against wrong. We seldom do well to be "angry;" we always do well to be "indignant." Anger suggests feeling mastering judgment; indignation suggests judgment giving character to feeling. Every man ought to be sensitive to wrong, whether it be done to others or to himself. The question for him concerns, not the feeling of indignation, but the forms in which such indignation may find expression. St. Paul ought to be indignant at the offering of such an insult, by one who occupied the position of a judge. "St. Paul's prompt and stern utterance perhaps anticipated compliance with this direction, which was quite illegal in itself, and must have been considered to be aggravated as given against a Roman citizen, placed at a Jewish bar by the Roman commandant." For a similar insult offered to our Lord, see John xviii. 22.

II. THE NOBILITY OF THE MAN WHO CAN APOLOGIZE EVEN FOR HIS RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATIONS. At once, in the spirit of the Christian gentleman, as soon as the official position of the person whom he had answered was pointed out to him, he expressed his regret. Some have, indeed, thought that he meant to say such conduct as that of Ananias made it impossible to regard him as the high priest, but it is more simple to read in his words some sense of his having yielded to his sensitive and intense feelings. Impulsive men are usually quick to acknowledge their faults, and to remove any evil impressions which their conduct or language may have produced. The highest virtue is the self-mastery that keeps us from making such mistakes; but the next virtue is a cheerful and humble readiness to make amends when our mistakes, or our hasty language, have injured another.

III. THE HIGHER RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE MASTERY OF INDIGNATION BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN FORBEARANCE. Just as there is a "righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," so there is a righteousness which exceeds the

worldly maxims and moral rules which guide ordinary men. It may be right to resent insult, but, from the Christian standpoint, it is much *more right* to bear it, and be patient under it, and forgive it. And *such* righteousness is illustrated in the scenes of our Lord's trial, when contumely was heaped upon him. Show that few things offer a severer test of Christian virtue than unprovoked and unreasonable insult. By it even the watchful man may be taken at unawares, and be suddenly moved to passion. Only the constant habit of thinking before we speak, and letting the moments of thinking be moments of prayer, can keep us in the trying hour. St. Paul's regret for his hasty words would be more profound before God than before men. He found a serious and humbling lesson in this mistake. Impress how often we err, and disgrace our Christian profession, by the tone and temper in which we "answer back."—R. T.

Ver. 6.—*The resurrection a dividing doctrine.* If the supposition be a correct one that, just at this time, there was no high priest, we can well understand how easily divisions and contentions might be aroused in the mixed council, where party feeling was always strong. The Pharisees and Sadducees were really more political than ecclesiastical parties; they had distinct lines of thought, and conflicted for the positions of supreme influence in the ecclesiastico-political life of the nation. Both parties vigorously opposed Christianity, but the Pharisees on the ground of its teachings—as they thought them—against Mosaism, and of its degrading the national hope of Messiah, by affirming that he had come in the person of the Galilæan Jesus. The Sadducees on the ground chiefly of the disciples' affirmation that Jesus had risen from the dead, which, they were quick to see, if once admitted, involved the truth of our Lord's claim to the Messiahship. St. Paul evidently estimated, quickly and skilfully, the character of the judges before whom he was brought, and easily turned them from the consideration of his case to mere party wrangling. He saw, plainly enough, that there was no chance of a fair judgment from either party. If we must recognize some guilefulness in St. Paul's conduct on this occasion, we must remember that he had to deal with party prejudice and unreasoning hatred, and he was justified in securing his deliverance by such a quick-witted device. We observe—

I. THAT THE JEWISH RESURRECTION WAS A DREAM OR A DOCTRINE. To the Sadducees a mere superstitious dream, to the Pharisees an important doctrine. Hints of it are found in the earlier Scriptures, but the Old Testament has no clear testimony on the subject. This is not really remarkable, because Mosaism did not take this point of view; it did not demand obedience upon the promise of the "life to come," but upon promise of "the life that now is." Thoughts of resurrection and eternal life do not properly come to a Jew *as a Jew*, only to a Jew as a personally devout, God-fearing man, with an individual spiritual life of fellowship with God. Therefore the psalmists and prophets alone give us hints of resurrection. See what helps come to the idea (1) from the translations of Enoch and Elijah; (2) from the resurrections to natural life wrought by Elijah and Elisha; (3) from the expressions used in the Book of Job, and in the Psalms; and (4) from allusions in the prophets. Exactly in what sense the Pharisees believed in resurrection it is difficult to say. Clearly they had no notion of that *spiritual body* in which Christ reappeared among men, and we also must appear. Probably they held the doctrine very much as we hold some of our doctrines, merely for a battle-ground. The Sadducees had not much difficulty in showing that *such a resurrection was a mere dream*.

II. THAT THE CHRISTIAN RESURRECTION IS A TRUTH AND A HOPE. St. Paul calls it here a *hope*, but it is really a *truth* upon which we may build our hopes. Illustrate by showing what St. Paul writes about it—about its foundations and about its vital importance to the Christian—in 1 Cor. xv. To him it was no mere dividing doctrine, though among foes he ventured so to use it; to him it was infinitely sure and infinitely precious—the message to him of his Redeemer's own resurrection. He laboured, if "by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

III. WHEREIN MAY WE FIND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE JEWISH AND THE CHRISTIAN IDEAS OF RESURRECTION? We only note one of the more important differences. Pharisees had only, as aids to their conception, cases of resurrection which were merely a temporary restoration of bodily life. All the risen ones they could know of died a natural death. Christians take their conception from the

resurrection of their Lord, which was to a spiritual, incorruptible, and eternal life.—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*Divine cheer in anxious hours.* One of St. Paul's marked peculiarities was sensitiveness to Divine visions and communications. Such visions are indeed granted only in the sovereignty of Divine grace; but we may see that they are granted only to such persons as are receptive, and likely to be influenced aright by them. The same remark may be made concerning "visions" and "miracles" and all special modes of Divine communication. They are conditioned as truly by what *man can receive* as by what *God can grant*; and this may sufficiently explain why we have no visions or miracles *now*. On St. Paul's sensitiveness to the Divine nearness, note (1) that his Christian life began in a vision and revelation; (2) that his labours had been directed in a special manner; and (3) that the culture of his spiritual life involved the quick, clear vision of the "unseen." Show what an anxious day this had been to the apostle. He estimated the malice of the Jewish party, and knew well that nothing short of his death would satisfy these zealots. No doubt he spent much time in prayer, and, as a response, there came this vision of his glorified Lord, and the cheering and assuring message. Our Lord gave his personal cheerings to St. Paul—by manifestation and message—on all the great occasions of perplexity and danger in the apostle's career (see ch. xviii. 9; xvii. 22—25, etc.). We may see that, in this instance before us, the grounds on which the apostle should be of "good cheer" were partly expressed and partly assumed.

I. "BE OF GOOD CHEER;" FOR YOU SHALL STILL WORK AND WITNESS. No joy to St. Paul could be compared with this, that he might be longer spared to work for his Divine Master. True, he could say that "to die is gain," but he could unfeignedly rejoice with his disciples that he was "to continue with them all for their furtherance and joy in faith." On this occasion, taken back to the castle in the charge of the Roman guard, he might reasonably have felt despondent. "To human apprehension there was at this time nothing between the apostle and death but the shelter afforded in the Roman barrack." He might fear that his work was done. All earnest Christian workers know what times of depression and despondency mean. Even after successful work there may come the feeling of exhaustion, and we may say, like Elijah, "Let me die, for I am not better [more successful] than my fathers." To Elijah, to St. Paul, and to us, at such times, the best of all cheer is the message, "The Lord hath need of thee" yet awhile. With such cheer the clouds pass; we can smile again on life. We are lifted up above our difficult circumstances and our exceeding perils. We learn that if bearing and battling have to be our lot, it is but for a while; we shall battle through, and we shall even serve God in the battling. This is good cheer indeed. "Christ shall still be magnified in our body, whether it be by life or by death."

II. "BE OF GOOD CHEER;" FOR I AM WITH YOU. This is the comforting which is *assumed* rather than expressed. Christ "stood by" the apostle, but it was only his coming out of the invisible into the visible. St. Paul only saw what was the permanent fact. His Lord was always standing by him, always within the visions of his soul. And there is no cheer for us like this. Compare the intense anxiety of Moses to be sure that Jehovah was present in the camp. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." It was perfect rest for anxious Moses to hear Jehovah respond, saying, "My presence shall go with thee." What is in this case assumed is actually expressed to St. Paul in some of his other visions. At Corinth Christ had said, "Be not afraid . . . for *I am* with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee." Still, we know that *trial* is nothing, if Jesus is with us, helping us to *bear*; and *work* is nothing, if Jesus is with us, helping us to *do*. "I can do all things, and can bear all sufferings, if my Lord be there." Then impress what is for us the real *cheer* of life. 1. Work. 2. God's presence the inspiration and the strength of our working. 3. The inward consciousness that God's approval rests upon our work. In our text Christ did but assure St. Paul, what he also assures us, that "man is immortal until his work is done." No arrow can pierce any one of us until our last battle has been fought, and it is enough that our Lord knows when our bit of service for him is complete.—R. T.



**Ver. 16.—*Providential protections.*** There is a time for miracle to work, and a time for providence to work, and the appropriate times the Lord of infinite wisdom and knowledge alone can arrange. It seems very strange to us that St. Peter should have been brought out of prison by the miraculous deliverances of an angel, and that St. Paul should be left dependent on the accident, as some would call it, of his nephew's overhearing the plot against his life. Yet, perhaps, there is no real difference between a "miraculous" and a "providential" deliverance. Both are Divine interventions on behalf of God's servants, and both are simply adaptations of the intervention to particular cases. When we can get a fuller and worthier conception of God's working in the "natural," we shall probably lose sight of the distinction which we now make between the "natural and the supernatural." And this we shall do, not by losing the "supernatural," but by losing the "natural," and seeing that all Divine workings are beyond mere "nature," beyond mere human energy. We shall find Divine energy in the flowers, and trees, and sunshine, and storms, and in the genius, art, and poetry of man. We shall not "level down," but "level up;" and, forgetting how men would drag us down to the operations of dead *law*, we shall find everywhere the working of the *living God*, and all life will seem to us God's great miracle. While we have to make a distinction between the "miraculous" and the "providential," we may notice that—

**I. THE ONE IS AN EXTRAORDINARY, THE OTHER AN ORDINARY AGENCY.** We know that our fellow-men, and we ourselves, have ordinary and regular methods of working, and that both we and they, under pressure of circumstances, sometimes transcend ourselves, and act with an energy, promptitude, skill, and power which quite surprises those who seem to know us most intimately. May not this suggest to us the distinction in God between the miraculous and the providential? The miraculous is the Divine working to meet sudden and unusual circumstances. Then we may see that there was no need for extraordinary intervention in St. Paul's case, because this was no sudden calamity, breaking in upon and interfering with the Divine order; it was but a step in the regular course of providential dealings with St. Paul, and ordinary resources of providence sufficed to overcome the seeming danger.

**II. THE ONE IS A TEMPORARY, THE OTHER A PERMANENT AGENCY.** God's providences have been working through all the ages, and they have sufficed to secure the safety of his servants under all kinds of perils. From the Old Testament numerous illustrations may be taken; *e.g.* notice how David was preserved while he was pursued by Saul; or see how events were providentially ordered for Joseph. Remarkable stories of wonderful providences are given in modern books; *e.g.* that of the man pursued by soldiers, who searched the house where he had found refuge, and quarrelled outside the door of the room in which he was secreted, as to whether that room had been searched; the quarrel resulting in their going away and never entering it. God's miracles have been wrought in almost every age, but they have always been *temporary* phenomena, special occasions of necessity, and having some *unusual* testimony to make. By their very nature miracles must be occasional only.

**III. ONE PRODUCES A SUDDEN IMPRESSION, THE OTHER APPEALS TO THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATION.** Miracles are *wonders*. They are not, indeed, wonders *only*; they are *works*; they are *signs and wonders*. Still, it is their chief characteristic that they arrest, arouse, surprise, excite attention. On the other hand, God's providences need to be watched for and observed and thought about. "Whoso will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Then impress that, in life, human agencies that seem to bring about results for us, as his nephew's intervention brought about St. Paul's safety, must never take our interest merely for their own sake. We must ever look *behind* them and see that they are but working out the Divine plan and Divine will. God delivered St. Paul from peril by the aid of his nephew just as truly as if he had rescued him by the hand of an angel.—R. T.

**Ver. 29.—*Strangers' testimonies to God's servants.*** The moral influence exerted by St. Paul on this Roman captain was so decided that he is compelled to send to his superior this report, "whom I perceived . . . to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds." Such a man as this captain would judge fairly matters of character or of conduct. He had no blinding and bewildering ecclesiastical prejudices

which made crimes where there were none. So his testimony to the apostle is important. Indeed, it is always well for us to feel that the world and the stranger are sure to judge us, and form impressions from our character and conduct. We cannot be indifferent to their opinion. Our walk and conversation ought to do honour to our Master. Men should "take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus." The words used by the captain here remind us of two things.

I. THAT THE WORLD WANTS NO JUDGMENT ON MEN FOR THEIR OPINIONS. About opinions a Roman soldier could be supremely indifferent. With opinions human laws and magistracies have nothing to do. In opinions men may have the fullest liberty and toleration. Only when opinions influence *conduct* in a way that imperils social order, or the safety of the state, does the law or the magistrate concern himself with it. So we find that, in order to bring so-called *heretics* under the civil power, it has always been necessary to accuse them of rebellion against the law; the judge condemns them as *anarchists*, not as *heretics*. In these times we are beginning to learn more fully that opinion had better not be interfered with, and that every man may have full "liberty of prophesying," of persuading men to adopt his views. And all wrong teachings are to be met by right teaching, by the moral force of argument, and not by the physical forces of the law. Though still we properly keep the liberty to matters of simple *opinion*; when men express their views in their conduct, we are bound to consider whether their conduct tends to preserve the public peace and the social order.

II. SECTARIAN PREJUDICE ALONE WANTS TO PUNISH MEN FOR THEIR OPINIONS. Even the sectarian Jews knew that St. Paul had *done* no wrong. They trumped up a charge against him of defiling the temple, but they knew well enough that it was a groundless charge. They were offended with his *opinions* and *teachings*, as opposing their own. Illustrate from the assumptions of the Papal Church, and her efforts to crush all who held other opinions than she sanctioned. Modern illustrations of the bitterness of sectarian prejudice may be mentioned. A man may, like the apostle, have the truth of God, but he must be rejected unless his message rings in exact harmony with the received opinions. Show, in conclusion, that the strangers' judgment of us is the only really important one. They ask what we are in *character, conduct, life, and relations*; and they can best judge about the value of our opinions by those things in which the opinions find their practical expression. Let, then, those outside our circles, the strangers, judge us as Christians. Will they say of us as the Roman officer said of St. Paul, "About their opinions we know little or nothing; but this we can say, They are good men and true"?—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 1.—*The high priest Ananias came down for Ananias the high priest descended, A.V.; certain elders for the elders, A.V. and T.R.; an orator, one Tertullus for a certain orator named Tertullus, A.V.; and they for who, A.V.* After five days. Of which the first was the day on which St. Paul left Jerusalem, and the fifth that on which Ananias and his companions appeared before Felix (see ver. 11, note). Tertullus. A Latin name, formed from *Tertius*, as Lucullus from *Lucius*, Catullus from *Catius*, etc. Informed; ἐμπαίζω, in the sense of "laying an information" before a magistrate, only occurs elsewhere in ch. xxv. 2, 15 (see above, ch. xxiii. 15, note).

Ver. 2.—*Called for called forth, A.V.; much peace for great quietness, A.V.; evils are corrected for for very worthy deeds are done unto, A.V. and T.R.; there is also a change in*

the order of the words, *by thy providence* is placed at the beginning instead of *at the end* of the sentence. When he was called. We see here the order of the trial. As soon as the charge is laid against the prisoner, he is called into court, to hear what his accusers have to say against him, and as it follows at ver. 10, to make his defence (see ch. xxv. 16). We enjoy much peace. The gross flattery of this address of the hired orator, placed at the beginning of his speech, in order to win the favour of the judge, is brought into full light by comparing Tacitus's account of the misconduct of Felix in Samaria in the reign of Claudius, who he says, thought he might commit any crime with impunity, and by his proceedings nearly caused a civil war ('Annal.' xii. 54); and his character of him as a ruler of boundless cruelty and profligacy, using the power of a king with the temper of a slave ('Hist.' v. ix.); and Josephus's statement that no

sooner was Felix recalled from his government than the chief men among the Jews at Cæsarea went up to Rome to accuse him before Nero, when he narrowly escaped punishment through the influence of his brother Pallas. By thy providence, "Providentia Cæsaris" is a common legend on Roman coins (Alford). Evils are corrected. The reading of the R.T., *διορθώματα*, meaning "reforms," occurs only here, but, like the kindred *κατορθώματα* of the T.R., is a medical term. *Διόρθωσις*, reformation, is found in Heb. ix. 10. The *κατορθώματα* of the T.R. (which also occurs nowhere else in the New Testament) means, in its classical use, either "successful actions" or "right actions;" *κατορθώω* is to "bring things to a successful issue." Possibly Tertullus may have had in view the successful attack on the Egyptian impostor (see ch. xxi. 38, note), or the wholesale crucifixion of Sicarii and other disturbers of the public peace.

Ver. 3.—*In all ways for always, A.V.; excellent for noble, A.V.* Meyer connects in all ways and in all places with the preceding *διορθωμάτων γινομένων*: "reforms and improvements that have taken place on all sides and in all places." Πάντῃ or πάντῃ, found only here in the New Testament, means "on all sides," "in every direction."

Ver. 4.—*But for notwithstanding, A.V.; I entreat thee for I pray thee, A.V.; to hear for that thou wouldst hear, A.V.* Of thy clemency (τῇ σὴ ἐπιεικείᾳ). The word is rendered "gentleness" in 2 Cor. x. 1, where alone it occurs in the New Testament; *ἐπιεικὴς* is most frequently rendered "gentle" (1 Tim. iii. 3 (R.V.); Titus iii. 2; Jas. iii. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 18). A few words. The Greek has συντόμως, briefly, concisely, found only here in the New Testament, but common in classical Greek and especially in medical writers, where it means "rapidly," "in a short time."

Ver. 5.—*Insurrection for sedition, A.V. and T.R.* We have found (εὐρόντες). The construction of the sentence is an anacoluthon. The participle is not followed, as it should be, by a finite verb, *ἐκράτησamen* (in ver. 6), but the construction is changed by the influence of the interpolated sentence, "who moreover assayed to profane the temple," and so, instead of *ἐκράτησamen αὐτόν*, we have *ὃν καὶ ἐκράτησamen*. A pestilent fellow (λοιμόν); literally, *a pestilence*; as we say, "a pest," "a plague," or "a nuisance," like the Latin *pestis*. It only occurs here in the New Testament, but is of frequent use in the LXX., as e.g. 1 Sam. ii. 12, x. 27, and xxv. 25, *υἱοὶ λοιμοί*, "sons of Belial;" 1 Macc. x. 61; xv. 3 *ἄνδρες λοιμοί*; and xv. 21, simply *λοιμοί* (rendered "pestilent fellows" in the A.V.), and elsewhere as the rendering of other Hebrew words. It is occasionally used also

in this sense by classical writers. A mover of insurrections (στάσεις, R.T.). This was the charge most likely to weigh with a Roman procurator in the then disturbed and turbulent state of the Jewish mind (comp. Luke xxiii. 2; John xix. 12). Felix himself had had large experience of Jewish insurrections. The Jewish riots at Philippi (ch. xvi. 20), at Thessalonica (ch. xvii. 6), at Corinth (ch. xviii. 12), at Ephesus (ch. xix. 29), and at Jerusalem (ch. xxi. 30), would give colour to the accusation. The world (ἡ οἰκουμένη). The Roman, or civilized, world (Luke ii. 1; iv. 5, etc.). Ringleader; *πρωτοστάτης*, only here in the New Testament, but used by the LXX. in Job xv. 24, and not uncommon in classical Greek, as a military term, equivalent to the first, i.e. the right-hand man in the line. Also, in the plural, the soldiers in the front rank. The sect of the Nazarenes. As our Lord was contemptuously called "The Nazarene" (Matt. xxvi. 71), so the Jews designated his disciples "Nazarenes." They would not admit that they were Christians, i.e. disciples of the Messiah.

Ver. 6.—*Moreover assayed for also hath gone about, A.V.; on whom also we laid hold for whom we took, A.V.* To profane the temple. The same false charge as was made in ch. xxi. 28. The remainder of ver. 6, after the words "on whom we laid hold," the whole of ver. 7, and the first clause of ver. 8, are omitted in the R.T. on the authority of α, Δ, Β, Γ, Η, etc. But the propriety of the omission is doubtful (Alford, Bishop Jacobson, Plumptre), though sanctioned by Mill, Bengel, Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf (Meyer). If the words are not genuine, it is a marvellously skilful interpolation, fitting into the place so exactly both at the beginning and at the end, and supplying a manifest want in the speech of Tertullus. (For the statement in ver. 8 A.V., comp. ch. xxiii. 30.)

Ver. 8.—*From whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take for by examining of whom thyself mayest take, A.V.* According to the R.V., whom refers to St. Paul, but according to the A.V., to Lysias. This last agrees with ver. 22. By examining him; *ἀνακρίνας* (Luke xxiii. 14; ch. iv. 9; xii. 19; xvii. 11; xxviii. 18; elsewhere only in St. Paul's Epistles). In ch. xxv. 26 the kindred *ἀνάκρισις*, examination, is used.

Ver. 9.—*Joined in the charge for assented, A.V. and T.R.; affirming for saying, A.V.* Joined in the charge. The reading of the R.T., *συνεπέθεντο*, means "joined in the attack upon," as in the LXX. of Deut. xxxii. 27 ("behave themselves strangely," A.V.); Ps. iii. 6 (Codex Alexandrinus; "set themselves against me," A.V.). The *συνεπέθεντο* of the T.R. means "agreed" (as John ix. 22: "assented.")



Ver. 10.—*And when the governor, etc., Paul answered for then Paul, after that the governor, etc., answered, A.V.; cheerfully for the more cheerfully, A.V. and T.R.; make my defence for answer for myself, A.V.* Forasmuch as I know, etc. St. Paul, with inimitable skill, pitched upon the one favourable side of his judge's person, viz. his long experience in Jewish affairs, and made it the subject of his opening reference—a courteous and conciliatory reference, in striking contrast with the false, fulsome flattery of Tertullus. Of many years. If Paul was speaking in the year A.D. 58, and Felix had been governor only since A.D. 53, "many years" was rather an hyperbole. But Tacitus expressly states that Felix was joint procurator with Cumanus; and therefore he had been a judge to the Jewish nation long before the banishment of Cumanus. Tacitus's authority is infinitely superior to that of Josephus, and this passage strongly supports the statement of Tacitus ('Annal.' xii. 54). *Make my defence* (τὰ περί ἐμῶν ἀπολογεῖσθαι). For the word ἀπολογεῖσθαι, and for the situation of St. Paul, and for the gracious promise provided for such situation, see Luke xii. 12; xxi. 15; see too ch. xix. 33; xxv. 8; xxvi. 1, 2; and for the use of ἀπολογία, see ch. xxii. 1, note.

Ver. 11.—*Seeing that thou canst take knowledge for because that thou mayest understand, A.V. and T.R.; it is not more than for there are yet but, A.V.; I went up to worship at Jerusalem for I went up to Jerusalem for to worship, A.V.* Twelve days. These days may be thus reckoned: (1) arrival at Jerusalem (ch. xxi. 15); (2) visit to James and the elders (ch. xxi. 18); (3) first day of purification (ch. xxi. 26); (4) second day of purification; (5) the third day; (6) the fourth day; (7) the fifth day, when the tumult took place (ch. xxi. 27); (8) Paul brought before the Sanhedrim; (9) the conspiracy of the forty Jews, Paul leaves Jerusalem for Cæsarea—the first of the five days mentioned in ch. xxiv. 1; (10) arrival of St. Paul "next day" at Cæsarea, and lodged in the pretorium—second of the five days (ch. xxiii. 32, 35); (11) Paul in Herod's judgment hall—third of the five days; (12) ditto—fourth of the five days; (13) the current day, being also the fifth day of those mentioned in ch. xxiv. 1. The mention of the brief time of twelve days shows the narrow limits of time within which the crime must have been committed, while the adroit mention of the purpose of his visit, to worship, would show how unlikely it was that he should have gone with any evil intent.

Ver. 12.—*Neither in the temple did they find me for they neither found me in the temple, A.V.; or stirring up a crowd for*

*neither raising up the people, A.V.; nor . . . nor for neither . . . nor, A.V.* Stirring up a crowd. The reading of the R.T. is ἐπίστασιν ποιούντα ὄχλου, which must mean "a stoppage of the crowd," in which sense it is a medical term. But Meyer thinks it is a mere clerical error for the reading of the T.R. ἐπιόυστασιν, which is used in the LXX for "a tumultuous assembly" (Numb. xxvi. 9; 3 Esdr. xxv. 9), and in Josephus, 'Contr. Apion.,' i. 20, of a conspiracy or revolt. In the LXX, also the verb ἐπισυνίσταμαι means "to rise in revolt against" (Numb. xiv. 25; xvi. 19; xxvi. 9).

Ver. 13.—*Prove to thee for prove, A.V.* Prove (παραστήσαι); see ch. i. 3, note.

Ver. 14.—*A sect for heresy, A.V.; serve for worship, A.V.; our for my, A.V.* (my is better, as following "I serve," and addressed to a Roman judge); *which are according to the Law, and which are written in the prophets for which are written in the Law and in the prophets, A.V.* A sect. This, of course, refers to this expression of Tertullus in ver. 5, Πρωτοστότης τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἵρεως, "Ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." The word αἵρεσις, which means primarily "choice," has not necessarily or even ordinarily a bad sense. In classical Greek its secondary sense was a "sect" or "school" of philosophy, Academics, Peripatetics, Stoics, Epicureans, etc. The Jews applied it to their own different schools of thought. So in ch. v. 17 we read, Αἵρεσις τῶν Σαδδουκαίων, "The sect of the Sadducees;" in ch. xv. 5, Αἵρεσις τῶν Φαρισαίων, "The sect of the Pharisees;" in ch. xxvi. 5 St. Paul speaks of himself as having been a Pharisee, Κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἵρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας, "After the strictest sect of our religion" (see too ch. xxviii. 22). It begins to have a bad sense in St. Paul's Epistles (1 Cor. xi. 19; Gal. v. 20; and 2 Pet. ii. 1, αἵρεσις ἀπωλείας, where, however, it gets its bad sense from the ἀπωλείας joined to it). In ecclesiastical writers it came to have its worst sense of "heresy" as something worse even than "schism." In this reference to Tertullus's phrase, St. Paul seems hardly to admit that Christianity was properly called "a sect" by the Jews, but gives it the milder term of "the Way" (see ch. ix. 2, note). The God of our [my] father (τῷ πατρὶ ὁ Θεὸς); comp. Gal. i. 14; and ch. xxii. 3; xxviii. 17. Observe how St. Paul throughout insists that, in becoming a Christian, he had not been disloyal to Moses, or the Law, or the prophets, or to the religion of his fathers, but quite the contrary. According to the Law. Κατὰ τὸν νόμον may mean either, as in the R.V., "according to the Law," or, as Meyer takes it, "throughout the Law," and then is better coupled, as in the A.V., with τοῖς γεγραμμένοις. The

Law, and . . . the prophets (as Matt. v. 17; Luke xxiv. 27, 44).

Ver. 15.—*Having for and have, A.V.; these also themselves look for for they themselves also allow, A.V.; resurrection for resurrection of the dead, A.V. and T.R.* Which these also themselves look for (see ch. xxiii. 6). Both of the just, etc. This is distinctly taught in Dan. xii. 2 (comp. Matt. xxv. 46; John v. 29).

Ver. 16.—*Herein . . . also for and herein, A.V. and T.R.; to have a conscience . . . alway for to have alway, etc., A.V.; and men for and toward men, A.V.* (For the sentiment, comp. ch. xxiii. 1.) Herein (ἐν τούτῳ); i.e. on this account, under these circumstances supplying the ground and cause of my action (comp. John xvi. 30). So, too, Matt. vi. 7, Ἐν τῇ πολυλογίᾳ αὐτῶν means "On account of their much speaking." I exercise myself; ἀσκήω, here only in the New Testament, but frequent in medical writers for "to practise" the medical art.

Ver. 17.—*After many years; or, several years.* St. Paul's last visit to Jerusalem was that mentioned in ch. xviii. 22. Since then he had spent "some time" (χρόνον τινα) at Antioch, had gone over all the country of Phrygia and Galatia, had come to Ephesus, and stopped between two and three years there, had gone through Macedonia, had spent three months at Corinth, had returned to Macedonia, and from thence had come to Jerusalem in about fifty days. All which must have occupied four or five years—from A.D. 54 to A.D. 58—according to most chronologers. Evidently Paul had not been plotting seditious movements at Jerusalem, where he had only arrived twelve days before, for a purely benevolent and pious purpose, after an absence of four or five years. Alms . . . and offerings. Those of which he speaks in 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4; 2 Cor. viii. ; Rom. xv. 25, 26, 31. To this may be added "the charges" for which he made himself answerable for the poor Nazarites (ch. xxi. 24, 26).

Ver. 18.—*Amidst which for whereupon, A.V. and T.R.; they found me purified in the temple with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but there were certain Jews from Asia for certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult, A.V. and T.R.* Amidst which (ἐν οἷς, R.T.) refers to the alms and offerings. The T.R. has ἐν οἷς, "under which circumstances," "at the transaction of which deeds," or, briefer, "whereupon," A.V. But there were. Most manuscripts followed by the R.T., read τινὲς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας, thus giving a broken unfinished sentence instead of the plain and complete one of the T.R., which agrees, moreover, exactly with ch. xxi. 27.

Ver. 19.—*To make accusation for object, A.V.* The sense is exactly the same.

Ver. 20.—*Men themselves for same here, A.V.; what wrong-doing they found for if they have found any evil doing in me, A.V. and T.R.; when for while, A.V.* Let these men themselves. Since the Asiatic Jews are not here to bear witness, let these men who are here speak for them-selves as to what they witnessed in the Sanhedrim.

Ver. 21.—*Before you for by you, A.V. and T.R.* (ἐπὶ for ὑπό). Except (ἢ): ἄλλο, else, is understood after τί, so that ἢ is equivalent to εἰ μή. Touching the resurrection (see ch. xxiii. 6, where the exact words are, "Touching the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question").

Ver. 22.—*But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying for and when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, A.V. and T.R.; determine for know the uttermost of, A.V.* Having more exact knowledge, etc. At Cæsarea, Felix must have seen and heard something of Christianity. The conversion of Cornelius with his household and friends, men belonging to the dominant Roman power; the work of Philip the evangelist, residing probably for some years at Cæsarea, and working among Romans as well as Jews, must have given Felix some knowledge of "the Way." He would learn something, too, both of Judaism and Christianity from Drusilla, his wife (ver. 24, note). When Lysias . . . shall come (see vers. 7, 8, and note). I will determine (διαγνώσκειν); see above, ch. xxiii. 15, where the verb is in the active voice, and is rendered in the R.V. "to judge." The idea of the word is "to know with discrimination;" and this is the sense it has in medical writers, who use it very frequently; as e.g. Galen says, Πρῶτον γὰρ διαγνώσκειν χρὴ τί ποτέ ἐστι πάθος (quoted by Hobart). Hence the "diagnosis" of an illness (ch. xxiii. 15).

Ver. 23.—*Gave order to the for commanded a, A.V.; that he should be kept in charge for to keep Paul, A.V. and T.R.; and should have indulgence for and to let him have liberty, A.V.; not to forbid any of his friends for that he should forbid none of his acquaintance, A.V.; to minister unto him for to minister or come unto him, A.V. and T.R.* Indulgence (ἀνεσις); literally, relaxation, viz. of the prison restraints and confinement. The word is used in the LXX. of 2 Chron. xxiii. 15, ἔδωκεν αὐτῇ ἀνεσις, i.e. those who had taken Athaliah prisoner, "let her loose" till she got out of the temple court. It is also a common medical term for the cessation or remission of pain or disease. St. Paul uses it four times in his Epistles for "rest" or "ease."

(2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 5; viii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 7.) Doubtless St. Luke was thus enabled to be much with St. Paul during his imprisonment, and, as suggested above, to have his help in writing his Gospel.

Ver. 24.—*But for and, A.V.; Felix came for when Felix came, A.V.; Drusilla, his wife for his wife Drusilla, A.V.; and sent for he sent, A.V.; Christ Jesus for Christ, A.V. and T.R. Came; παραγενόμενος, a very favourite word with St. Luke, occurring twenty-nine times in his Gospel and the Acts. It implies that Felix had been absent from Cæsarea for some days after the trial. Drusilla. She was, according to Josephus ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. vii. 1, 2) the daughter of Herod Agrippa I., who "killed James with the sword" (ch. xii. 1, 2), and died shortly afterwards. She was first the wife of Azizus, King of Emesa; but Felix, becoming enamoured of her on account of her singular beauty, employed a certain magician, a Jew named Simon, to entice her away from her husband, and persuade her to marry him, contrary, as Josephus says, to the institutions of her country. She perished, with Agrippa, her only son by Felix, in the eruption of Vesuvius, in the reign of Titus (Josephus, as above). Tacitus says that Drusilla, the wife of Felix, was granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. But he seems to have confounded her with another of the three royal wives of Felix, mentioned by Suetonius in 'Claudius;' unless, perchance, as has been conjectured, he had two wives of the name of Drusilla, of whom one was, as Tacitus says, granddaughter of Antony, by being the daughter of King Juba and Cleopatra Selene, Antony's daughter (see note in Whiston's 'Josephus,' and in Kuinoel, on ch. xxiii. 24). But there is no certainty on the subject. Only Josephus's detailed account of Drusilla, the wife of Felix, agrees with St. Luke's statement that she "was a Jewess," and is beyond doubt true.*

Ver. 25.—*And temperance for temperance, A.V.; the judgment for judgment, A.V.; was terrified for trembled, A.V.; and when for when, A.V.; call thee unto me for call for thee, A.V.*

Ver. 26.—*Withal for also, A.V.; would be for should have been, A.V.; that he might loose him is omitted in the R.T. and R.V.; wherefore also for wherefore, A.V. Sent for him the oftener. The mixture of conviction with covetousness in the mind of Felix as the motive for seeing Paul is observable. As in other cases of double-mindedness, the convictions were doubtless stifled by the corrupt avarice, and so came to nothing.*

Ver. 27.—*When two years were fulfilled for after two years, A.V.; Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus for Porcius Festus came into Felix' room, A.V.; desiring to gain*

*favour with the Jews for willing to show the Jews a pleasure, A.V.; in bonds for bound, A.V.; Felix is also translated. Was succeeded by; έλαβε διάδοχον. This word occurs only here in the New Testament, but is used twice in Ecclesiasticus. It is also, as above noted, the identical word used by Josephus of Festus. But in ch. xxv. 1 Festus's government is called an έπαρχία, and Josephus ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. viii. 11) calls Festus an έπαρχος, instead of the more usual έπίτροπος. Could Josephus have seen the Acts of the Apostles? Porcius Festus. Josephus speaks of him as sent by Nero to be the "successor" (διάδοχος) of Felix ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. viii. 9; 'Bell. Jud.,' ii. xiv. 1). Nothing is known of him from Tacitus or other Latin historians, and he appears from Josephus's account to have held the government for a very short time, probably less than two years, when he died ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. ix. 1). But the impression derived from Josephus is the same as that conveyed by St. Luke, that he was a just and upright ruler, in marked contrast with Felix his predecessor, and his successors Albinus and Gessius Florus. Desiring to gain favour (χάριτι καταθέσθαι); literally, to lay up in store good will, or favour, or a boon, to be requited at some future period. A frequent phrase in the best classical authors. Felix had good reason thus to try and put the Jews under obligation to him at the close of his government. For the danger was great to the retiring governor of complaints being sent to the emperor of oppression and plunder, which were often listened to and punished. Josephus relates, in point of fact, that the chief Jews in Cæsarea sent an embassy to Rome to lodge a charge against Felix before Nero; and that he only escaped punishment by the influence of his brother Pallas ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. viii. 9).*

The scene in this chapter is a very striking one, depicted with admirable simplicity and force. The bloated slave sitting on the seat of judgment and power, representing all the worst vices of Roman degeneracy. The heads of the sinking Jewish commonwealth, blinded by bigotry and nearly mad with hatred, forgetting for the moment their abhorrence of their Roman masters, in their yet deeper detestation of the Apostle Paul. The hired advocate with his fulsome flattery, his rounded periods, and his false charges. And then the great apostle, the noble confessor, the finished Christian gentleman, the pure-minded, upright, and fearless man, pleading his own cause with consummate force and dignity, and overawing his heathen judge by the majesty of his character. It is a graphic description of a very noble scene.



## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—27.—“*Not this man, but Barabbas.*” There are many gradations of the truth stated in 1 Sam. xxi. 7, “The Lord seeth not as man seeth,” and the corresponding truth, “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” But both passages mark distinctly how often the judgment of man diverges from the judgment of God, or in other words, how far men often are from “judging righteous judgment” concerning persons and things which come under their notice. This false or erroneous judgment proceeds from two causes. The *first* is the comparative ignorance of man. He forms his judgment oftentimes on insufficient grounds. His mental vision only takes in a portion, sometimes a very small portion, of the materials upon which a sound judgment should be based. In the instances to which 1 Sam. xvi. 7 refers, Samuel, judging by the fair looks and commanding stature of Eliab, thought he must be fit to be the ruler of Israel. His eye could not discern the heart, the hidden character of the man. And so it continually happens. We base our judgments on insufficient premises, being ignorant of those things which, if known, would influence them in an opposite direction. The practical lesson to be drawn from this view of the erroneous judgments of men is threefold. 1. To be diligent in adding to our knowledge whenever we are called upon to form a judgment. 2. To be always diffident and modest in regard to our own conclusions. 3. Whenever our judgments do not agree with those of Holy Scripture, to be sure that the disagreement arises from our own ignorance, and to submit ourselves accordingly. But the *second* cause of men’s erroneous judgments is not mere ignorance, but injustice and unfairness of mind. Men misjudge others because they are influenced by hatred, prejudice, self-interest, and other corrupt motives. They are like the unjust judges spoken of by Isaiah (v. 23), “who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.” A large part of the favourable and unfavourable judgments of the world are of this character. We have a typical example of this in the chapter before us. Here are two men standing on the stage of observation. One is Felix. We know him as a cruel, licentious, unrighteous man, steeped in blood, rich by oppression, profligate in conduct. We know him as one the meanness of whose servile origin broke through the crust of the splendour of his official greatness. We know him as a man raised to power by the most corrupt and shameful influences which have ever prevailed in national affairs, and abusing that power to the utmost under the screen of an infamous security. By his side stands another man, certainly one of the greatest figures among the great men of the world, and one of the very best among the very good of the children of men. It is the Apostle Paul. For his mighty victories in the world of mind and spirit he might have borne surnames from provinces of the East and of the West, more glorious than those of the Africani and Germanici of the Roman commonwealth. For energy of action, for dauntless courage, for inexhaustible resource, for masterful vigour of character, for lofty eloquence, for influence over the minds of other men, he stands abreast with the greatest of the earth’s heroes. For absolute disinterestedness, for unsullied purity, for overflowing benevolence, for ardent and glowing kindness, for self-sacrifice, for self-restraint, for uprightness, for truth, for generosity, for laborious well-doing, for consistency of life, for perseverance through every hindrance and contradiction in a sublime and noble purpose, for tenderness and faithfulness to friends, and for ungrudging service to his Divine Master, where shall we find his equal? What, then, was the judgment passed on these men respectively—this Felix and this Paul? Felix is thanked and belauded for his “very worthy deeds;” Paul is “a pestilent fellow;” “Away with him from the earth: it is not fit that he should live!” And so we are reminded of another judgment, the unanimous judgment of a great multitude: “Not this man, but Barabbas!” and we are put upon our guard against the judgments of men.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—23, 26, 27.—*Malice, innocency, and power.* We have illustrated here—  
I. THE WEAPONS OF MALICE. 1. Persistent hatred. It was a long journey to

Cæsarea, and it was a most humiliating thing, to which they were utterly averse, for the high priest and the elders to appear before the Roman judge to get their countrymen into their own power; nevertheless the undying hatred, the animosity which did not diminish by time carried them through their distasteful work. 2. Disgusting flattery (vers. 2, 3). 3. Gross misrepresentation (ver. 5). Paul had caused no little dissension and conflict among his fellow-countrymen, but it was simple perversion of the truth to call him a "pestilent fellow," etc. 4. Offensive characterization (ver. 5). Paul was "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes;" but malice put his position into the most offensive form it could command. 5. Downright falsehood (ver. 6). He had not "gone about to profane the temple." These various falsities came from the lips of Tertullus, but they were owned and adopted by the Jews (ver. 9). To such baseness malice will stoop to compass its ends; to such iniquity professed piety will condescend when inflamed by the unholy heats of bigotry.

II. THE DEFENCE OF INNOCENCE. 1. Courtesy (ver. 10). We may not flatter, but we must be courteous and conciliatory (1 Pet. iii. 8; 1 Sam. xxv. 23—33). 2. Straight-forward statement (vers. 11, 14—17). There is no better way by which to prove our integrity than telling the whole truth from beginning to end, with perfect frankness. 3. Fearless denial (vers. 12, 13, 18). We should solemnly deny, in calm and dignified language, that which is falsely alleged against us; in quietness and composure rather than in vehemence and loud protestation, is our strength. 4. Righteous challenge (vers. 19, 20). We may do well to face our accusers with bold and righteous challenge (John viii. 46).

III. THE PITIFULNESS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IN POWER. Felix (1) gave an unrighteous decision, for the case had broken down, and Paul should have been released, (2) hankered after a bribe (ver. 26); was willing to sell justice for money; (3) left his position with an act of selfish injustice (ver. 27). He presents a pitiful picture both as a public administrator and as a private individual. How little to be envied are those who climb to high stations! How contemptible is power when it is perverted to mean and selfish ends! How admirable, how enviable in comparison, is innocence in insignificance or even in bonds!—C.

Vers. 15, 16.—*A powerful incentive to a noble life.* Between the life of the meanest and basest men on the one hand, and that of the purest and noblest on the other, what an immeasurable spiritual space intervenes! We look here at—

I. A NOBLE HUMAN LIFE. There are those who, in the ordering of their life, never rise above (1) a consideration of their own enjoyment or acquisition. There are others who never rise higher than (2) the consideration of others which is born of natural affection; that which springs from the ties of kindred and, perhaps, common interest or companionship. Others again there are who get as far as (3) political or national enthusiasm. But they only are worthy of the One "with whom they have to do," and reach the full stature of their manhood, who are constrained by (4) the sense of obligation to God and to man. Paul "exercised himself to have always a conscience," etc. Here was: 1. *A lofty aim.* "To have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." This means something more than the avoidance of the darker sins and the greater crimes, of those misdeeds which stamp a man as a sinner and a criminal in the eyes of the world. It means (1) righteousness in the sight of the Supreme; the being counted righteous by God, and the attainment of positive righteousness like his own; so that a man is living in a state of abiding acceptance with God, and is also walking before him in uprightness and integrity of heart and life. It means also (2) recognition of the claims of men on our regard, and the consequent shaping of our life in purity, honesty, truthfulness, helpfulness; so that a man has not to reproach himself either with acts of injury or with negligence and inconsiderateness; he has a "conscience void of offence" toward men as well as toward God. 2. *A comprehensive view.* Paul aimed to be conscientious at all times, in all things (*διὰ πάντοτε*). And we know that this was more than a figure of speech; it could hardly be said to be in any way hyperbolic. He did strive to act with a good conscience *always*. With whomsoever he had to do, in whatsoever he was engaged, he sought to act faithfully. And the truly noble life is one in which the humbler as well as the higher activities and endurances are regulated by holy and heavenly principles. 3. *An earnest endeavour;*

"I exercise myself," i.e. "I strenuously endeavour," "I put forth my whole energy," "I labour." Paul's action amounted to something vastly more than an occasional sentiment or a feeble futile effort; it was an earnest aspiration spending itself in vigorous exertion. He cultivated his spiritual powers; he trained himself in holy habits; he wrestled with the adversaries of his soul; he did stern battle with the lower propensities; he strove to exhibit the graces which are dear to God, the virtues which are valuable to men.

II. A POWERFUL INCENTIVE TO LIVE IT. (Ver. 15.) We may draw many powerful and all-sufficient incentives to rectitude from considerations which are at hand. 1. Our supreme obligation to God, the Divine Author of our being and Source of all our joy. 2. Our influence upon our fellow-men, and the effect our life has on theirs. 3. The elevated joy we have in the consciousness of rectitude, both of integrity of heart and innocency of life. But we shall do well to add this other also: 4. The hope of future blessedness; including (1) the approval of the Divine Master; his "Well done" (Matt. xxv. 21); and (2) the extended sphere he will appoint the faithful (Matt. xxv. 21).—C.

Vers. 24, 25.—*Rare heroism and common folly.* There are two main points well worthy of attention.

I. AN ACT OF MORAL HEROISM PARTICULARLY RARE. Paul "reasoned of righteousness, continence, and judgment to come." It requires some courage for a man to address a company of his fellows, even when he feels sure that they will be sympathetic; it demands other and far higher courage to address a number of men, when it is certain they will be unsympathetic; but it requires higher devotedness still, it demands heroism of a rare order for one man to use the language of remonstrance and rebuke when speaking to another man, particularly when that other is the stronger and higher of the two. For the poor man, the captive, the accused, the one who stood absolutely in the other's power, to "reason of righteousness, continence, and judgment to come," to the unrighteous and dissolute judge, who had so much ground for dreading the future, —for Paul thus to expostulate with Felix was heroism itself. Let us thank God that he gave us such a man, to do such a work, at such a time in the history of our race. Let us emulate his spiritual nobility. High courage is, in part, a *gift to be thankfully accepted*; but it is also, in part, a *grace to be studiously acquired*. Paul was the faithful man he proved himself at Cæsarea, not only because his Creator endowed him with a fearless spirit, but because (1) he placed himself on the right side—on the side of truth, of righteousness, of God; and because (2) he cultivated carefully the conviction that infinite power and love surrounded him with its constant care. He could always say, "The Lord stood by me." This is the secret of spiritual nobility, of moral heroism.

II. AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL FOLLY PAINFULLY COMMON. "Felix trembled." His agitation should have passed at once into resolution; he should have said at once, "I will return on my way; I will turn my back on my old sins; I will be a new man, living a new life." But he did not; he made terms with his old self; he temporized; he played with his opportunity; he resorted to evasion, to self-deception; he excused himself; he said, "Go thy way; when I have," etc. O well-worn, much-trodden path of self-excuse, along whose pleasant way such thousands of travellers have gone on to their ruin! This is how we commit spiritual suicide, how we go to our death! We do not say presumptuously, "I will not;" we say feebly, falsely, fatally, "I will soon,"

I will when——" There are three strong reasons against delay under religious conviction. 1. *It is a guilty thing.* We blame our children when they hesitate or linger instead of rendering prompt and unquestioning obedience; but we are more bound than they to implicit and unhesitating obedience to the Supreme. "I will when——" means "I will not now." It is rebelliousness of spirit put in the least flagrant form; but it is still rebellion; it is a state of sin. 2. *It is a delusive thing.* We defer, imagining that we shall find ourselves able and willing to do the right thing further on. But we have no right to reckon on this; for: (1) Outward hindrances tend to become stronger rather than weaker. Life becomes more and more complicated, companions grow more numerous and urgent, difficulties and entanglements thicken, as our days go by; the hedge before us becomes thicker and higher continually. (2) And inward and spiritual obstacles become more difficult to surmount; the habit of the soul to-day is the *finest* silken thread which the child's finger may snap, but it will shortly become



the strong cable which the giant's strength will be unable to divide. Well does Scripture speak of "the deceitfulness of sin." 3. *It is a fatal thing.* If vice has slain its thousands, and pride its thousands, surely procrastination has slain its tens of thousands. The man who is consciously and determinately refusing to serve God knows where he stands and what he is; he knows that he is a rebel against God, standing on perilous ground. But he who thinks he is about to enter the kingdom, or even dreams of so doing, shelters himself under the cover of his imaginary submission, and goes on and on, until sinful habit has him in its iron chain, or until "pale-faced Death" knocks at his door, and he is found unready.

"Oh, 'tis a mournful story,

Thus on the ear of pensive eve to tell,

Of morning's firm resolve the vanished glory,

Hope's honey left to wither in the cell,

And plants of mercy dead that might have bloomed so well."

C.

**Vers. 1—23.—Paul before Felix.** I. TERTULLUS AND PAUL: A CONTRAST. Between false and spurious eloquence. False rhetoric, as Plato taught, always owes its power to its flattering the passions of the audience. So here the orator addresses himself directly to the magistrate's self-love. It is pretty clear that Felix, instead of being the beneficent ruler he is described as being, must have been well hated by the people for his vices and oppression. Later they accused him to the emperor. Flattery is a great solvent. The great gain the little, and not less the little gain the great to their ends by it. "Great lords, by reason of their flatterers, are the first to know their own virtues, and the last to know their own vices" (Selden). "Know that flatterers are the worst kind of traitors" (Sir W. Raleigh). On the other hand, true eloquence speaks to the heart and conscience (ver. 10). Paul indulges Felix in no flattering complimentary titles. He respects the office and the existing order which it represents, true to his teaching in Rom. xiii.; but not the bad man in the office. He speaks with freedom and boldness. He avows himself the member of a despised sect. He is a Nazarene. But Christianity is no newly invented heresy, nor does the gospel depart from the faith of the fathers. Rather Christ's gospel their spiritual sum and substance, the end and goal of the old covenant. All that is true in any of our sects is continuous with the old; what is quite novel is probably not true. The simple words of Paul contain a fine defence of persecuted opinions. 1. They are not of yesterday. 2. The future belongs to them. 3. Meanwhile, the great thing we exercise is a good conscience. If they are really conscientious, force cannot put them down.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S BEST DEFENCE. 1. "To have a conscience void of offence." Religion which does not aim at this and end in this, is vain; otherwise a mere matter of the head, or of hereditary habit, an occasion of contention and source of division, chaff without wheat, and a shadow without life. A life that will bear the inspection of men and of God, the only certificate of true religion; or rather, the endeavour for such a life. The "exercise of one's self" in worthy habits, to noble ends. 2. Hope is ever connected with the good conscience. The hope of the resurrection not a doctrine the splendour of which first appears in the New Testament pages; it appears in bright glimpses in the Old from the time of the Babylonian Captivity onward. In some form it lives and burns at the heart of all genuine faith and religion. With a joyous confession on the lips, a clear conscience in the bosom, an innocent life-record behind one, the just judgment of God before one's expectation,—here are the defences of the Christian against the arrows of calumny.—J.

**Vers. 24—27.—The Divine Word and the conscience.** I. LOVING THE SOUND OF THE GOSPEL, BUT NOT THE GOSPEL ITSELF. There is silver music in the message of reconciliation to man's distracted heart; but the call to repentance as the necessary condition of peace, this is discordant with passion and self-will. And there are grave errors here. Some suppose that the gospel renders the moral law superfluous; others, that the freedom of the conscience under the gospel means licence; others take faithful reproof as personal affront; many are under the dominion of sense, and the will is captive to the lusts of the flesh.

**II. WHY MANY NEVER BECOME SERIOUS CHRISTIANS.** 1. They have not the resolution for thorough repentance, to break utterly with the evil past. 2. They neglect the acceptable time and the day of salvation. "The golden grace of the day" flees, and never comes back to them. 3. They thrust aside the thought of judgment to come. Though they know the vanity of the world, they are too indolent to tear themselves from its deceptive pleasures. Disgusted with the hateful bondage of sin, they are too weak to break off their fetters. Superficial impressions are felt, but frivolity admits no deep impressions.

**III. THE EXCUSES OF THE SINNER.** 1. Certain subjects are not in good taste. Speak to me of everything but *that*! Generalize on virtue and goodness, but let my favourite weaknesses or vices alone! 2. Procrastination. "To-morrow!"

"To-morrow and to-morrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death."

"Procrastination is the thief of time.  
Year after year it steals till all are fled,  
And to the mercies of a moment leaves  
The vast concerns of an eternal time."

The time of repentance is now and always for him who is willing. For God is ever calling, inwardly and outwardly; in every circumstance time can be found to obey. But never for him who cannot find it seasonable to listen to God at any time. "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me, and shall die in your sins" (John viii. 21).

**IV. AN EXAMPLE OF GENUINE PREACHING.** 1. He speaks of repentance and its fruits; justice towards our neighbour; personal purity; sober recollection of the Divine judgment. 2. Its powers. The preacher is a slight and insignificant man, yet he makes the powerful magistrate tremble. He is bound in one sense, yet in another free, and the lord is the real slave. He is the accused; yet quickly he changes parts with Felix. Paul is the hero in the light of truth and of eternity, Felix the coward and the abject. If we are on the side of truth, the Word of God becomes a sword in our hand. If we are opposed to it, we must be fatally pierced by it.—J.

Vers. 1—9.—*The governor's court.* Time given to Paul for special preparation, possibly for communication with fellow-believers in Cæsarea. The relation of the parties to one another. *The Roman ruler*; his character one of the blackest: "In the practice of all kinds of lust and cruelty, he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave" (Tacitus). *The calm, heroic, lofty-minded apostle*; rejoicing that an opportunity would be given him of proclaiming the gospel in such a place, and upheld by the Divine assurance that he was safe. *The representatives of the Sanhedrim*; Ananias, the elders, and the paid orator Tertullus, evidently feeling the weakness of their cause, half ashamed of their position in attacking a defenceless man, ready for hypocritical plotting, and yet knowing that no dependence could be placed on Felix.

**I. A SAD PICTURE OF THE WORLD** as it was at that time. The corruption of judges, the despotism of rulers, the furious hatreds and evil passions at work, the blindness of fanaticism, the decay of religious life in the nation which had received most religious teaching and privileges.

**II. AN EXAMPLE OF CALUMNY AND MISREPRESENTATION.** The charges made were of political rebellion, of heresy, of sacrilege, of disorder. The first was insincere; for the priests among the Jews cared nothing about preserving Roman rule. The others were instigated by fear of Paul's teaching, partly due to ignorance, but mainly to bigotry and jealousy. They knew that if the gospel was accepted, their own priestly power was gone. Truth is always stronger than falsehood.—R.

Vers. 10—21.—*The just man's defence.* Twofold—negative; positive. The accusations met by a clear and bold denial. Over against the false representation a simple and candid statement of his position as a private and public man. Notice—

**I. The apostle stood firmly on the ground of LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.** They accused him of heresy; he maintained that his conscience was void of offence towards God and man.

**II. The foundation of confidence is THE WORD OF GOD—the Law, the prophets, the true tradition of the fathers.** All these things the apostle believed.

**III. THE RESURRECTION** was the great stumbling-block to the Jews, but the great support of the apostolic faith. The position taken in the Sanhedrim is maintained before Felix. The resurrection is the vital point of the new faith.

**IV. The zeal of the Christian** was quite consistent with **PATRIOTISM.** There was nothing revolutionary in the method of Christian teaching. The disturbance was simply due to the presence of a new element of life among old corruption. So always, the world is turned upside down by earnestness, because it is already the wrong side upwards.—R.

**Ver. 16.—Practical religion.** “And herein do I exercise myself,” etc. Circumstances of the case justify the self-assertion. We must not be afraid to give our own example as a testimony to the truth.

**I. Practical religion is founded on THE HEARTFELT ACCEPTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD.** “Herein,” *i.e.* in the faith just described, distinguished from: 1. The irreligion of Felix; indifference and direct opposition to God. 2. The blind bigotry of Pharisaism; mere worship of the letter of Scripture and tradition; an excuse for conscientious life. 3. The *speculative unbelief* of Sadducees. Rationalism. Intellectual pride. *Faith made living* in Christ. The facts of the gospel opened the secrets of the Scriptures to Paul. Jesus became to him the Word of Life.

**II. Practical religion demands CONSTANT EFFORT.** “I exercise myself.” 1. Not asceticism, but zealous endeavour to do good in proclamation of the gospel. 2. Faithful and heroic patience under the trials of life. 3. The showing forth of Christian character before the world for a testimony, both by the blameless conduct, and by the calm and bold defence of the truth when necessary. The secret of strength and courage is a conscience void of offence. Those who do not exercise themselves both give offence and find offence. “If God be for us, who can be against us?”—R.

**Vers. 22—27 (or ver. 25).—The character of Felix in the light of Christianity.**

**I. THE CORRUPT JUDGE.** Selling justice for bribes, delaying sentence in hope of gain, either from the Jews or from Paul. The influence of Christianity in purifying courts of law. Judge Hale. Room for improvement still as Christian equality banishes all distinctions between rich and poor. Justice is still too dear.

**II. THE MAN WITH SEARED CONSCIENCE.** In contrast with him who exercises himself to have a conscience void of offence. The light of education, of contact with Judaism through Drusilla, of knowledge of facts at Cæsarea, all darkened by sensuality, avarice, worldly power, constant trifling with conscience. He could tremble at truth, but even while trembling was ready to sell it for his own vicious pleasures. He felt its force, but steadfastly resisted it, and even sent again and again for Paul, in hope to make gain out of him.

**III. THE TRIFLER WITH OPPORTUNITY.** Preaching may move the feelings without changing the heart. Behind the procrastination there is generally a moral corruption hidden. The opportunities which are trifled with harden the heart and hasten the judgment. Felix knew not the time of his visitation. Judgment fell on him, and the Jews, to whose wickedness he pandered, became his accusers before Cæsar. No season is more convenient than the present, when the voice of God says, “Repent!”—R.

**Ver. 5.—The indictment that was a self-indictment.** The preparations for the indictment of Paul before Felix had been well considered. Somewhat formidable, save to the strong heart, and that divinely refreshed (ch. xxiii. 11), most concerned in the matter, must the legal phalanx have appeared, when Ananias the high priest, and the elders, and their practised professional helper Tertullus, and others of the Jews, made their appearance. The speech containing the accusation against Paul, which began with flattery for a Felix, not unnaturally culminates in falsehood hurled at Paul, and mockery flung at the Nazarene. The portraiture of perverseness such as this is no novelty; yet some peculiarity in the featuring may be found here. A new touch or



two fails not to give some new expression to the countenance. What a mournful commentary on human nature, that it is necessary to contemplate its worst expression of countenance, and to study, not the model to copy, but the type false and debased to avoid! Consider, therefore—

I. WHAT IT IS THAT IS UNDERLYING THE FACT THAT THE FAITHFUL TEACHER OF CHRIST IS DESCRIBED AS "PESTILENT." *These* are the two things that underlie the ugly fact. . . That it is the depths of a muddy nature that are reached. 2. That it is something that has the undisputed power to reach those depths that is present and working. The "pestilence" was all subjective to Tertullus and friends. The strong force was the force of Christ.

II. WHAT IT IS THAT UNDERLIES THE FACT THAT THE DEVELOPING MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S MIND TO THE WORLD HAVE SO UNIFORMLY FROM THE FIRST PROVOKED NOT A FEW TO VOTE THEM NOTHING BETTER THAN THE SIGNS OF SEDITION. *These* are at least some of the things that underlie the fact. 1. That the unfolding of God's mind and purpose to the world always means war with its *inertness*. The keen appetites of the world are *not* to true knowledge, *not* to godly activity, *not* to wisdom's perfect work. 2. That the growing manifestation of God to mankind always means a summons to simpler, purer, more determined holiness and height of life. The stir and report that swell round the echoes of the voice summoning men in this sort are indeed sedition to their stifled order of life and of habit and of affection. It is not in them to "seek for honour, glory, and immortality." God's greater, better, clearer gifts necessarily postulate a truer human return of them, and a correcter reflection.

III. WHAT IT IS THAT UNDERLIES THE FACT THAT THE PUREST FOLLOWING OF THE PUREST TRUTH AND OF THE HIGHEST IDEAL WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN TO MEN HAS SO OFTEN GATHERED OVER ITS INNOCENT HEAD THE WORST ACCUMULATIONS OF MISCONSTRUCTION, MISREPRESENTATION, AND FALSEHOOD. A notable instance is here before us. The polished orator, the trained and keen lawyer, heaps the epithets, every one ill or of ill omen, "pestilence," "sedition," "ringleader," "sect," "the Nazarenes" These were the fruit of a tongue rather than merely a pen "dipped in gall." And false is the word stamped, as a monogram is stamped, on every one of them. These are some at least of the causes at work under the fact. 1. That reason, opportunities of knowledge, convictions, conscience injured, ignored, insulted, know terrible ways of revenge, and a terrible force of revenge. Obscurity becomes thick darkness; mistake becomes wilful preference for the wrong; one sin becomes a multitude. 2. That a certain sort of heart, once deeply conscious, without the slightest readiness to acknowledge it, that it is *losing*, loses also itself, loses its self-control, and finds itself drifted, hurried, hounded on to senseless lengths. Heaven's sweetest beneficence—for this it has nothing but the vocabulary of traducing slander.

CONCLUSION. These things are *not* the necessities and inevitable things of human nature. They are results of permitted unfaithfulness, condoned infidelities, encouraged wilfulness, and deliberate defiance of truth, in place of devoted affiance to it. Deep need the roots of them to be sought, that without mercy they may be uprooted and exterminated. And they need the prayer earnestly offered, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."—B.

Vers. 10—21.—*The defence of Paul.* The simplest analysis of the defence which Paul here made for himself is its highest praise. The matter of it must be closely dependent upon the occasion, but the characteristics of its method must be good for all occasion, and imitable to all generations. Notice in this defence—

I. ITS ADDRESS TO THE JUDGE, UNFURNISHED BY A HOLLOW COMPLIMENT. The contrast which is presented in this respect to the introduction of Tertullus speaks for itself. There is here nothing but simple truth.

II. THE HONEST BUSINESSLIKE POINTEDNESS WITH WHICH IT PROCEEDS TO ITS ONE TASK. "I do the more cheerfully answer for myself," says Paul. He could never answer for himself with hope of any ordinary justice before a council of his own people. But now, while this is his one task to answer for himself, and he takes to it immediately, he does not refrain from saying that there are aspects of the case which enable him to throw himself with spirit into his work.

III. ITS ENTIRE ABSTINENCE FROM ANYTHING BEARING THE REMOTEST RESEMBLANCE TO ABUSE OF HIS ACCUSERS. Paul denies the allegations laid to his charge, shows to an experienced judge that there was very little time in which the things alleged could possibly have occurred, and challenges, by a direct contradiction, the ability of his highly respectable accusers to prove their assertions and make out their charges. But through all there is not a word that sounds like "pestilent fellow," or "sedition," or "ringleader."

IV. ITS DIRECT PENETRATING TO WHAT LAY AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER. This was a difference "in the way of worshipping God." The keen Roman judge (and Paul knew it and correctly took advantage of his knowledge) was not likely to be so very anxious to lend the force of Roman law and a Roman executive to the mere bidding of Jewish bigotry and ecclesiasticism.

V. ITS HONOURING BEFORE ONE WHO KNEW LITTLE AND THOUGHT LESS OF IT, CONSCIENCE THE FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE OF ALL RELIGION. Paul does not blow contempt upon the truths or methods of religion, even in that shape of religion least understood or honoured by Felix, *revealed* religion. He declares: 1. His conscience. 2. His living constant care of it. 3. His acknowledgment of the necessity of training it to correctness and to vigour. 4. His recognition of its twofold duty, (1) toward God and (2) toward man. In all this, there can be no doubt that Paul honoured his God, his religion, and his individual conscience, with no hope of any deep sympathy, on the part of Felix indeed, but also without any fear of the high priest Ananias again daring to order them to "smite him on the mouth."

VI. ITS VERY EVIDENT BUT NONE THE LESS CONSUMMATE STROKE OF POLICY, IN POINTING TO THE FACT OF THE STRANGE ABSENCE OF SOME WITNESSES, AND THE STRANGER SILENCE OF OTHERS ALTHOUGH THEY WERE PRESENT. Paul calls attention to the fact that these two things speak for themselves. And finally challenges once more contradiction of this position, that he had not been the originator of any disturbance whatever, much less seditious disturbance in Jerusalem, unless his famous interpolation, "Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day," could be interpreted as such. But Paul knew this challenge could not be taken up, both because the Pharisees sided with him in the matter on the very occasion, and because the disturbance was one as between the rival theologies of the Jews, and not as between mere civilians. The correctness, cogency, calmness, of this defence made up its masterly convincingness. There could be no doubt which party had the moral victory of the day. There can be no doubt of the fallen countenances of Ananias and elders and Tertullus. And there can be no doubt that, in this very defence, the accused Christian may hear to the end of the world words not altogether unlike these: "After this manner, therefore, defend ye yourselves."—B.

Ver. 14.—*The confession of a coherent worship and faith.* Paul is, of course, at no loss to account for the enmity of the Jews manifested toward him. And it is his intention that his judge shall overhear, if not hear, the true state of the case. He has vindicated himself and will still vindicate himself against the ostensible accusations laid to his charge. But now he pierces beneath all pretences and appearances, and touches firm ground. And the concisest way of conveying his view of the state of things to his judge lies in a very simple confession of his religion. To which we may consider (as suggested by Paul's language here) two things to be essential. They are—

I. WORSHIP. And Paul is able to say these three things all distinctly germane to the confession. 1. That he *worships*. 2. That he *worships God*. 3. That he worships *the God of his fathers*, i.e. the very same God whom his accusers profess to worship.

II. A DEFINITE FAITH. An intelligible faith makes an informed instead of a superstitious worship. There are *ways and ways*, of worship. And these follow very consistently the faith that is held. Notice: 1. That Paul very decidedly pronounces for himself that his faith embraces "*all things written in the Law and the prophets.*" 2. He implies that the faith of his enemies failed of this. It fell short, perhaps, partly in its very character, but probably much more seriously in its compass. The typical Jew of the days of Jesus prided himself in reading the Law literally and fully, though with many a corrupt addition. His "*way*" of interpreting the prophets was of a far more eclectic character. He couldn't see, because he *wouldn't believe*, the humble and

the humbling prophecies of the Messiah. Paul's "heresy" was, in fact, that he believed "all." The Jews' ruining sin was that they would not believe "all." This quietly spoken sentence of Paul gave the key to all. And it is another comment upon the Jews in harmony with that uttered by Jesus himself, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me," etc. (John v. 46).—B.

Ver. 15 (see also previous Homily on ch. xxiii. 6).—*A hope grown from a deep and manifold root.* The hope that there shall be a resurrection of the dead is here described as a "hope toward God." It is hope pre-eminently resting upon God. For—

I. IT IS THE INSTINCTIVE HOPE TOWARD GOD OF OUR NATURE GIVEN BY HIM. The deep-seated instincts of nature are necessarily among the strongest moral arguments of which we can take cognizance.

II. IT IS THE HOPE TOWARD GOD THAT COMES OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF OUR TRAINED REASON, A REASON GIVEN ALSO BY HIM. Reason's arguments upon certain highest subjects, *by themselves*, may easily be uncertain and fallacious. But as guides on the way to other arguments, and as supports of other arguments, they are often very significant, very suggestive, very helpful. And it is so to a high degree in this instance.

III. IT IS THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN HEART TOWARD GOD. It is *the end* of the gospel to him who believeth. If this hope fall through, all falls through. The Christian's deception becomes an absolutely typical and leading instance of deception for the whole world's whole length of history; and the Christian's disappointment the keenest of all disappointments—his collapse making him the most miserable of all men.

IV. The hope that this resurrection shall include *all*—the "unjust" as the "just"—IS A HOPE TOWARD GOD RESTING EMPHATICALLY ON THE TESTIMONY OF HIS OWN REVELATION, AND CONTRIBUTED TO LARGELY BY CERTAIN ASPECTS OF HIS JUSTICE WITH WHICH THAT REVELATION MAKES US FAMILIAR. In this theme the mystery of unfathomable depths of unsearchable wisdom is before us. It enwraps the height of highest hope, the deepest things of fear.—B.

Vers. 24, 25.—*The highest powers eluded by the heart's subterfuges.* The immediate connection reminds us very forcibly how the man who is the worst friend to himself is sometimes environed with opportunities charged with the offer of mercy. Providence and the God of all providence long wait upon him in natural relationships, in his very weaknesses, in suggestions and inducements of almost every various kind. How many things conspired now to give Felix the opportunity of hearing and knowing the truth! His position, his popularity, his knowledge "of that Way," the fact of his having married a Jewess, and even the itching of his hand for a bribe (ver. 26)—things so strangely at variance with one another and some of them with goodness—did nevertheless all combine to make him a hearer of the things greatest and best to be heard. He heard, felt, resisted, and lost. And Felix is a great and long-enduring illustration of—

I. THE POWER THAT LIES IN THE APPEALS OF RELIGIOUS, AND SPECIALLY OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH. There are deep valid reasons for this. 1. *Right* lies with them, by the verdict of (1) even reason; (2) conscience; (3) experience of practical life. In every one of these directions, even to all their ramifications, there is nothing like a mere beating of the air, nothing like mere sound and fury, nothing like *vox et præterea nihil*, in the appeals of religious truth. Each appeal is a home-thrust, that purports to reach and is fitted to reach what is deepest and most enduring in a man. And each appeal is a manifesto in the name of one or more of these grand authorities and arbiters of human life. 2. The imaginings, as just as they are instructive (if not first stifled) of the mysterious looming future, lend a large contribution to the power of religious appeal. Sometimes they are roused as by the mutterings of distant thunder, sometimes as by strains and snatches of celestial music. The echoes are for some so rich with sound, so mellow; or for others they wander as though haunting the empty chambers of hollow hearts. The *apprehension* of the infinite and the infinite future "hangs in doubt" before many eyes. But it is not always the apprehension of *fear*, and whether one or the other it does its work. 3. Love, and of an unusual kind, dwells in them. The interference with the sacredness and the retiredness of individual thought and feeling which is offered by religious appeal, and offered also with a certain appearance of arbitrary authority, is remarkably counterbalanced by its undisputed disinterestedness.



Men would never bear to be addressed on any other subject whatsoever in the way and in the tone and with the persistency to which they readily yield themselves in the matter of the appeals of religion. And that they sufficiently know nothing but their own deepest advantage is aimed at, is the sufficient account of it. 4. No doubt the commanding power of religious appeal—in the sense of *convincing* power—is due to the operation of the Holy Spirit.

II. THE POWER OF RESISTANCE TO THE APPEALS OF RELIGION, WHICH EMPHASIZES SO TERRIBLY HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY. The deep *reality* of such power of resistance is testified with certainty from the too well-known *fact* of it. Notice such *causes* of it as are traceable amid the deeper and inscrutable mysteries that cloud the subject. 1. A mind really turned from the light and truth. 2. A heart that is strong in its own pride. How many a heart knows the love that is intended for it, yet of pride refuses it! 3. An aversion to effort, specially *moral* effort; and to the demand of change which it involves in habit and action, specially that form of change called *reform*. 4. The grievous facilities for yielding to temptation. Legion is the name of subterfuge in things moral. The wide sweep of opportunity for resisting, courts the very spirit of him who is open at all to the approach of temptation. The shifts to which such will condescend to have recourse are innumerable, unaccountable, and find their strict description only as of those “devices of Satan, of which we are not ignorant,” indeed—“not ignorant” in a double sense—but against which so many are unarmed and irresolute in their presence. The versatility also of subterfuge in order to gain the end of resistance is amazing. It can blind the eyes of reason and of self-interest. It can stifle the conscience and hush to silence the deepest, justest sources of fear. It can defy the lessons of practical life. It will induce a man to use the responsible advantages of his own highest position to stay, in feeling’s most favoured and critical moment, the pressure and all the persuasion of moral importunity itself. And to all else, to elude the one precious moment of grace, temporizing, procrastinating, playing with time, it condescends to the mournfully vain expedient of attempting to throw dust with one hand into the eyes of others, and into its own with the other. The moment when Felix trembled as he heard the great verities of life announced and urged, was the fairest moment of his life. But it vanished. And the darkest moment succeeded it all swiftly, when Felix not only resisted the pleadings of knowledge, of truth and grace, and of the Spirit, but resisted them by the aid of the subterfuges of procrastinating, “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”—B.

Ver. 2.—*The influence of a good ruler on national evils.* See the rendering in the Revised Version, “Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation.” How far this may be a true description of Felix it may be difficult to decide. The only good thing known of his rule is the energetic effort which he made to put down the gangs of *Sicarii* (Assassins) and brigands by whom Palestine was infested. Within two years of this very time Felix was recalled from his province, and accused by the Jews at Rome. He only escaped punishment by the intervention of his brother Pallas, then as high in favour with Nero as he had been with Claudius. But Tertullus describes the proper influence of good rulers, and so suggests a subject on which we may profitably dwell.

I. THE GROWTH OF NATIONAL EVILS, ESPECIALLY IN A CONQUERED NATION. Certain forms of lawlessness are only kept in check by the strong hand of an active, vigorous government. In every land there are criminal classes and revolutionary classes, and these make headway as soon as, from any cause, the pressure of authority and national police is relieved. In a conquered nation there is always a dangerous sympathy with the revolutionary classes, which increases burglary, brigandage, and murder. Effective illustration may be taken from the recent history of Ireland.

II. THE MODES IN WHICH SUCH NATIONAL EVILS MAY BE CORRECTED. 1. There is the simple, but harsh method of conquest by armies, and the crushing down of all expressions of life by brute force. This, however, never really succeeds. 2. There is the slow method of forming aright public opinion, which makes the nation become its own police. This often fails, because the demagogue creates an opposing and unworthy public opinion. 3. There is the influence gained by the good ruler who can be prompt and strong, wise and far-seeing, who loves the people, and masters the evils for the

people's sakes. Such a ruler secures *peace* from external quarrels and internal dissensions, and, in securing *peace*, bears directly on the people's well-being. He effects all reasonable *reforms*, so as to remove everything that hinders the national prosperity. Show that it becomes us to pray for good rulers; to seek grace and help for them that they may rule well; and to aid them in carrying out all good schemes.—R. T.

Ver. 3.—“*Most noble Felix; or, the power of the flatterer.* Felix was not noble at all. Tacitus says of him that “in the practice of all kinds of lust, crime, and cruelty, he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave.” Tertullus had an end to gain, and adopted flattery as a means. He was a hired pleader, and selected for the sake of his glib eloquence. He could talk well. Men of his class were found in most of the provincial towns of the Roman empire. They were necessary because the local lawyers would not be sufficiently familiar with the proceedings at the Roman courts, or with the minute details of Roman law. Tertullus had “learned the trick of his class, and began with propitiating the judge by flattery.” Canon Farrar says, “Tertullus was evidently a practised speaker, and St. Luke has faithfully preserved an outline of his voluble plausibility. Speaking with polite complaisance, as though he were himself a Jew, he began by a fulsome compliment to Felix, which served as the usual *captatio benevolentiae*. Alluding to the early exertions of Felix against the banditti, and the recent suppression of the Egyptian false Messiah, he began to assure his excellency, with truly legal rotundity of verbiage, of the quite universal and uninterrupted gratitude of the Jews for the peace which he had secured to them, and for the many reforms which had been initiated by his prudential wisdom.” The subject suggested for our consideration is this—What are the limits of praise? How far may we go in conciliating others by words of approval and congratulation? At once it may be answered that no praise may go beyond the truth or be out of harmony with the truth. But in practical life we have to remember that different persons have different estimates of personal character. 1. Some are incompetent to form sound judgment, and such persons give praise that is simply unsuitable, but is not spoken with any purpose of flattering. 2. Others are prejudiced, and can only see the evil sides of a man's character and actions. Their estimates are wholly unworthy. 3. Others are just as blind to the evil and as prejudiced to the good, and their estimates, though seemingly flattering, are really only exaggerated and untrustworthy; they lack criticism, but are not insincere. 4. Yet others praise with some object which does not appear; they have an end to gain, and the praise is regarded simply as a means towards obtaining the end. These are the *flatterers*, and their characteristic is insincerity. The following points may be illustrated concerning the power of the flatterer:—

I. HIS MOTIVES. Always some personal end is in view. Usually the flatterer seeks to get something that is not in itself right. It is an agency to use when a man's case is bad. If a man lacks arguments, he will flatter the judge. He means to throw him off his guard, and to get him into a favourable mind by praises.

II. HIS AIDS IN THE PERSON FLATTERED. There is in us all, even in the best of men, a *self-love* that makes praise pleasant. If the flattery is kept well in hand and skilfully disguised, even noble natures, even humble natures, may be swayed by it. If the flattery is too open and intense, good men are put on their guard and resent the insult.

III. THE MORAL MISCHIEF OF HIS WORK. Show the injury that is done to the *flatterer himself*, who is confirmed in his insincerity when he finds flattery succeed. A man may get into such a habit of flattering that he will lose the power to recognize the truth, and come to believe in his own exaggerations. Show the injury that is done to the *person flattered*, who may be led to form an undue estimate of himself, and so be placed in positions of extreme moral peril when the hour of temptation comes. If it is wrong for us to think of ourselves above that which we ought to think, it must be wholly wrong for any one to flatter us so that our self-opinion is unduly raised. Felix was really pushed a little nearer to his fall by this flattery of Tertullus. For Scripture teachings concerning flattery, see Ps. xxxvi. 2; lxxviii. 36; Prov. ii. 16; xx. 19; xxvi. 28; xxix. 5, etc. Press the apostolic counsel, “Speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph. iv. 25).—R. T.

Ver. 14.—*The way called heresy.* The Revised Version reads, “After the Way which

they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers." St. Paul's teachings the Jewish party certainly regarded as heresy, and did not hesitate to call heresy. St. Paul urges that he did no more than belong to a sect, or section, of the Jews, who, while worshipping according to the Mosaic system, had received, as they believed, some further light by the direct revelation of God. To some Jews St. Paul's doctrine of resurrection, based upon the fact of the resurrection of Christ, was a heresy. To others his free announcement of gospel blessings to the Gentiles was a heresy. But his chief offence in the eyes of the more bigoted Jews lay in this, that he freed his Jewish converts from the characteristic demands of the Jewish ritual. This was, in their eyes, heresy indeed. As indicating a wider use of the term *sect* than that with which we are familiar, it may be noticed that it was used of Jewish sects by Josephus, of schools of philosophy by Greek writers generally, and of schools of medicine by Galen. There are four sides from which *heresy*, as a misrepresentation or perversion of accepted truth, may be viewed.

I. HERESY AS IMPERILLING THE TRUTH. The apostle speaks distinctly of false doctrine, which puts the Christian truth in peril. There are great first principles, great foundation truths, and for these we do well to be jealous. But we must clearly see that while heresy on these points is dangerous to the Christian faith and life, heresy on points which men have been pleased to elaborate—on mere details and accepted formulæ—have never shaken the rock-built house of truth, and never will. God has given us two all-sufficient tests of moral and religious truth. No heresy ever yet has stood the application of these two tests. 1. Is the statement in harmony with God's revealed Word? 2. Does it practically work out into that which is good—morally pure and good? We need never fear any presentation of so-called truth that is in accord with God's Word, and is manifestly "unto holiness." It is God's truth, whatever some may call it, if it helps to make men holy.

II. HERESY AS A SYNONYM FOR INDIVIDUALITY. This it very often is. A man expresses a well-established truth in some new form or new phraseology, and, without waiting to examine it, and see if it was only new clothing on the old body of truth, his fellow-men raise the heresy shout, and create prejudice against him. St. Paul's heresy was only individuality, and God gave him that individuality in order that it might make him a holy power. Jews called it heresy, but we have learned to glory in the gospel with the Pauline stamp upon it. The lesson taught by the Christian records of nearly two thousand years, but which we are strangely unwilling to learn to-day, is that we must never crush individuality by the shout of heresy, but thank God for sending men who can clothe his old truth in adaptation to the thought and life of each succeeding age.

III. HERESY AS REQUIRING JUDICIAL INTERFERENCE. This men think it does. This it never does. God's truth never wants the bolstering of any human courts or judges. God's truth asks only one thing from the world's powers and potentates—to be let alone. Truth wants the open air and the sunshine, that is all. It can win its own way. It can carry its own conviction. It can take care of its own purity. It can cast off all unworthy additions. We greatly need an absolute and unquestioning confidence that God's truth is in no danger. It smiles at unbelief and over self-reliant science, much as the granite rocks seem to do at the wild careering waves.

IV. HERESY AS THE HEALTHY ASSERTION OF NEGLECTED SIDES OF TRUTH. Truth—revealed truth—is a great whole, but no one age seems able to take in the whole; some parts are always prominent and some are always in the background; and there is this constant peril, that the truths in the foreground are treated as if they were the whole, and any one who brings up to view the neglected aspects is liable to the charge of heresy. Many a so-called heresy is only a missed truth or a half-truth; and then, after men have done "calling names," they are glad to accept the teaching. One rule is set before us, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," whatever may be the name by which men call it.—R. T.

Ver. 16.—*Loyalty to God and men.* "A conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Bishop Butler's definition of "conscience" can hardly be surpassed. He says, "There is a principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve and disapprove, their own actions. We are plainly constituted such sort of



creatures as to reflect on our own nature. The mind can take a view of what passes within itself, its propensions, aversions, passions, affections, as respecting such objects and in such degrees, and of the several actions consequent thereupon. In this survey it approves of one and disapproves of another, and toward a third is affected in neither of these ways, but is quite indifferent. This is strictly conscience." (See previous Homily on ch. xxiii. 1.) This subject may be fitly introduced by discussing—What is conscience? What is its sphere? and What are its limitations? The expressions in the text remind us that the testimonies of our conscience depend upon our cherished *standards*. There ought to be a due recognition of both Divine and human rules, and our conduct has to be regulated in view of both. St. Paul presents us the example of the man who is loyal to the revealed will of God, and loyal also to the rules which men make for the regulation of their social relations. These may indeed sometimes clash, and then the true-hearted man must follow out the Law of God, whatever may be the consequences. But usually there is found a practical harmony between the two, so that the moral life is acceptable both to God and man. In estimating the value of others' opinion of us, let us remember that the great thing to cherish is our *will to that which is right*, and our *inward consciousness of being right*. That conviction was the strength of St. Paul. When Plato was told that he had many enemies who spoke ill of him, "It is no matter," he said, "I would so live that none should believe them." It may be impressed, in conclusion, that the merely natural conscience is practically insufficient and untrustworthy as a guide of life; and it absolutely needs spiritual illumination, a quickening by the power of the Holy Ghost.—R. T.

Ver. 23.—*St. Paul's liberty*. "He commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty." It is evident that the prosecution of the apostle by the Jewish party had utterly broken down. No charge could be substantiated which made him amenable to punishment according to Roman law. If Felix had been a *free* man, and, as a judge, free of all other considerations than the doing of justice, he would have liberated St. Paul at once, declaring publicly his innocence. But Felix was not free. No man is really free who does not dare to *do the right*. And we can recognize a gracious overruling providence in St. Paul's being kept for a while longer under Roman protection. So great was the enmity against him of the Jewish party, that his life would have been in extreme peril if he had been liberated. Knowing that he was dealing unfairly by the prisoner, and impressed by his dignity of bearing, Felix compromised matters with himself, persuaded himself that he could secure Paul from the schemes of the Sanhedrim by keeping him prisoner; put off Paul's enemies by an excuse that he would confer with Lysias; and privately arranged for Paul to have a real, though not an apparent, liberty. Through all the ages some of the worst wrongs have been done in the name of compromise, which is too often the weak device of those who cannot "stand firm to the right."

I. FELIX BOUND. 1. By the weakness of his moral character. 2. By the desire to please an important section of those whom he had to govern. 3. By the consequences of his own wrong-doings, which it cost him all his effort to keep off as long as possible. 4. By the circumstances in which he found himself placed, and which he had no strength of will or purpose to master. The man of vice and self-indulgence enervates his will, and becomes the slave of his sin as truly as does the drunkard.

II. PAUL APPARENTLY BOUND. He had been tied by a chain to a Roman soldier day and night, according to the usual Roman custom, and if Felix relaxed this, still Paul was a prisoner in the barracks, and probably a soldier-guard waited on him constantly. If his friends were free to come to him, he was not free to go out to them. If we estimate his character aright, we shall feel that even the slightest form of bondage must have been most painful to him. His was a soul so noble than even the limitations of a frail body were to him an agony.

III. FELIX GETTING AS FREE AS POSSIBLE FROM HIS BONDS. Not free enough to say, honestly and honourably, "This man is innocent of all crime against the state, and must be set at liberty at once." Only able to shake the fetters off enough to say, "Forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him," and only able to give this order in a private way to the centurion.

IV. PAUL REALLY FREE. However he might seem to be still set under outward

limitations, nothing can imprison a man save his own wilful sin. Nobody can put any real fetters on any fellow-man. Each man who wears fetters puts them on himself; each man who dwells in a prison goes in himself, and himself bolts the door.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage."

But "whosoever committeth sin becomes the slave of sin." So, whatever may have been the limitations of the apostle's circumstances, there was no bondage, for there was no conscience of sin. The freedom of Paul (1) to commune with God, (2) study the truth, (3) to serve the Churches, may be shown; and it may be pointed out how often the very limitations of a man's circumstances, through sickness or persecution, has found him the freedom for some great and noble service, as may be illustrated from Luther's work while in the Wartburg, and from John Bunyan's work while in Bedford jail.—R. T.

**Vers. 24, 25.**—*The substance of the faith in Christ.* From Farrar's 'Life of St. Paul,' note to p. 340, vol. ii., see the relations of Felix to this Drusilla. She was a Jewess by birth, and would be interested in a man who was the object of such virulent persecution. She had, no doubt, heard of the Prophet of Nazareth, and was likely to show some curiosity when one of his leading disciples was a prisoner at the court. Private audiences were given to Paul, and he was invited to speak freely concerning "the faith in Christ." It is a side light thrown upon the greatness of St. Paul's nature, that he used his opportunities at once so skilfully and so nobly. "With perfect urbanity, and respect for the powers that be, he spoke of the faith in Christ which he was bidden to explain, in a way that enabled him to touch on those virtues which were most needed by the guilty pair who listened to his words. The licentious princess must have blushed as he discoursed of continence; the rapacious and unjust governor as he spoke of righteousness; both of them as he reasoned of the judgment to come. Whatever may have been the thoughts of Drusilla, she locked them up in her own bosom; but Felix, unaccustomed to such truths, was deeply agitated by them" (Farrar). The word "faith" is employed in Scripture with several distinct meanings; here it is used of the Christian doctrine, but St. Paul deals with the practical rather than the theoretical aspects of it. His remarks bore upon that first necessity of Christianity, the conviction of sin. Bungener puts the point of his preaching both succinctly and forcibly when he says, "Paul, as usual, wished to press certain consequences; and it is always against these that people resist, even when they are far better than Felix and Drusilla. 'He heard him concerning the faith in Christ; and as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come'—of righteousness, to a cruel and unjust despot; of temperance, to a debauchee whose very marriage had been but one scandal the more; and of judgment to come, to a man who had doubtless sought in Epicurean negations a refuge from the gods—'then Felix trembled.'" St. Paul's theme finds expression in three words: *righteousness*, full and honourable discharge of all the duties which man owes to God, and man owes to man; *temperance*, or the due control of all the appetites and passions of the body; *judgment to come*, or the certainty that all life-conduct must, sooner or later, be perfectly appraised, and due punishment be inflicted. "St. Paul does not confine himself, as a merely ethical teacher might have done, to abstract arguments on the beauty or the utility of 'justice' and 'temperance.' Here, also, his own experience was his guide, and he sought to make the guilty pair before whom he stood feel that the warnings of conscience were but the presage of a Divine judgment which should render to every man according to his deeds. It will be noted that there is here no mention of the forgiveness of sins, nor of the life of fellowship with Christ. Those truths would have come, in due course, afterwards. As yet they would have been altogether premature. The method of St. Paul's preaching was like that of the Baptist and of all true teachers" (Plumptre). The three topics may be treated in a more general way if presented thus: 1. Righteousness, or the Divine ideal of a human life. 2. Temperance, or a man's personal responsibility in the use of his body, and the shapings of his human relationships. 3. Judgment to come, or the appalling fact for all who follow their own wilful ways, that results must be divinely recognized. Compare the convincing of the Spirit, which is of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and

press that only upon the conviction of sin can the message of a Saviour from sin come with power to any one of us.—R. T.

**Ver. 25.—Convenient seasons.** This familiar topic needs but a brief outline. Procrastination is one of man's chief perils. It is the "thief of time," the "delusion of the evil one." No man has any "by-and-by," any "to-morrow" to which he can trust. "Now" is our accepted time, our day of salvation. A man has nothing but the passing moment; yet he comfortably shifts off the duty of to-day by the vain fancy that it can be done to-morrow. "Felix is the type of the millions whose spiritual life is ruined by procrastination." Philip Henry says, "The devil cozens us out of all our time by cozening us out of the present time." Archias, a supreme magistrate of the city of Thebes, was seated at a feast, surrounded by his friends, when a courier arrived in great haste, with letters containing an account of a conspiracy formed against him. "My lord," said the messenger, "the person who wrote these letters conjures you to read them immediately, being serious things." "Serious things to-morrow," replied Archias, laughing, and then put the letters under his pillow. This delay was fatal. The conspirators that evening rushed into the banqueting-room, and put the careless Archias, with all his guests, to the sword.

**I. CONVENIENT SEASONS MAY EXCUSE DELAY.** Better opportunities always seem to be away in the future. The pressure of daily business or daily pleasure will surely be lightened some day. We all have our eye upon some distant time when we mean to be in earnest about religion, and our sincere intent excuses our present delay.

**II. CONVENIENT SEASONS MAY EASE THE CONSCIENCE.** This is what we have in the case of Felix. He was smitten, but was purposed not to yield, so quieted conscience with a vague promise.

**III. CONVENIENT SEASONS MAY NEVER COME.** They seldom do. Press that the only convenient seasons for us are just those in which God brings home to our souls his truth, and urges us to its acceptance. Could Felix only have seen it, the *most convenient season* for him was the hour when Paul urged upon him the "faith in Christ." —R. T.

**Ver. 26.—Covetousness excusing injustice.** Felix proved utterly ignoble. His reasons for leaving a man prisoner whom he knew to be altogether innocent, are base. "Willing to do the Jews a pleasure." "Hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul." Felix is stamped as (1) a time-server, and (2) as a corrupt judge. "Felix, well knowing how the Christians aided one another in distress, and possibly having some information of the funds with which St. Paul had been recently entrusted, and ignorant of those principles which make it impossible for a true Christian to tamper by bribes with the course of the law, might naturally suppose that he had here a good prospect of enriching himself." Nothing so quickly and so utterly debases a man as the cherished spirit of covetousness. This, however, is a somewhat unusual form and expression of the many-sided evil. Olshausen says, "The sword of God's Word pierced deep into the heart of Felix, but for this very reason he suddenly broke off the conference. But his moral baseness betrayed itself strikingly in this, that he could still hold fast his prisoner for the mere purpose of obtaining money for his release, yea, that at his departure from the province, he left him in prison, out of complaisance to the Jews." Illustrate (1) that *Felix knew the right*; (2) but that, nevertheless, he *did the wrong*; and (3) that the *love of money in part explains his choosing the wrong*. The following incident may be helpful in the illustration of this third point:—"A case was tried before a young *cadi* at Smyrna, the merits of which were these. A poor man claimed a house which a rich man usurped. The former held his deeds and documents to prove his right; but the latter had provided a number of witnesses to invalidate his title. In order to support their evidence effectually, he presented the *cadi* with a bag containing five hundred ducats. When the day arrived for hearing the cause, the poor man told his story, and produced his writings, but could not support his case by witnesses; the other rested the whole case on his witnesses, and on his adversary's defect in law, who could produce none; he urged the *cadi*, therefore, to give sentence in his favour. After the most pressing solicitations, the judge calmly drew out from under his sofa the bag of ducats which the rich man had given him as a bribe, saying to him very gravely,



'You have been much mistaken in the suit, for if the poor man could produce no witnesses in confirmation of his right, I myself can produce at least five hundred.' He then threw away the bag with reproach and indignation, and decreed the house to the poor plaintiff."—R. T.

## EXPOSITION

### CHAPTER XXV.

Ver. 1.—*Festus therefore having come for now when Festus was come, A.V.; went up for he ascended, A.V.; to Jerusalem from Cæsarea for from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, A.V.* The province (*ἐπαρχία*); above, ch. xiii. 34. After three days, etc. It is an evidence of the diligence of Festus that he lost no time in going to Jerusalem, the centre of disaffection to the Roman government.

Ver. 2.—*And for then, A.V.; chief priests for high priest, A.V. and T.R.; principal men for chief, A.V.; and they besought for and besought, A.V.* Chief priests; as in ver. 15 and ch. xxii. 30. But the reading of the T.R., "the high priest," is more in accordance with ch. xxiv. 1, and is approved by Alford. The high priest at this time was no longer Ananias, but Ismael the son of Phabi, who was appointed by King Agrippa towards the close of Felix's government (Josephus, 'Ant. Jud.,' xx. viii. 8). He went to Rome to appeal to Nero about the wall which the Jews had built to screen the temple from being overlooked, and which Agrippa had ordered to be pulled down; and being detained at Rome as a hostage, he was succeeded in the high priesthood by Joseph Cabi the son of Simon. We may feel sure that on this occasion he was present before Festus, for he had not yet gone to Rome. Informed him (*ἐνεφάνισαν*); see ch. xxiv. 1, note. The principal men of the Jews (*οἱ πρῶτοι*). In ver. 15 Festus speaks of them as *οἱ πρεσβύτεροι*. The question arises as to whether the two phrases are identical in their meaning. Meyer thinks that the *πρῶτοι* includes leading men who were not elders, i.e. not Sanhedrists. Josephus calls the leading Jews of Cæsarea *οἱ πρωτεύοντες τῶν Ἰουδαίων* ('Ant. Jud.,' xx. viii. 9).

Ver. 3.—*Asking for and desired, A.V.; to kill him on the way for in the way to kill him, A.V.* Asking favour, etc. The Jews evidently thought to take advantage of the inexperience of Festus, and of his natural desire to please them at his first start, to accomplish their murderous intentions against Paul.

Ver. 4.—*Howbeit for but, A.V.; was kept in charge for should be kept, A.V.; was about to depart thither shortly for would depart shortly, thither, A.V.* Was kept in charge. Festus did not merely mention the fact,

which the Jews knew already, that Paul was a prisoner at Cæsarea, but his determination to keep him there till he could go down and try him. The A.V. gives the meaning. Either *δεῖν* is to be understood, as if Festus should say, "Paul is a Roman citizen; Cæsarea is the proper place for him to be tried at before the procurator, and therefore he must be kept in custody there," or some such words as, "I have given orders" must be understood before "that Paul should be kept."

Ver. 5.—*Saith for said, A.V.; which are of power among you for which among you are able, A.V.; if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him for accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him, A.V.* Which are of power among you; i.e. your chief men, or, as we should say, your best men, which would include ability to conduct the accusation as well as mere station. Josephus frequently uses *δυνατοί* in the sense of "men of rank and power and influence," *Ἰουδαίων οἱ δυνατώτατοι* ('Ant. Jud.,' xiv. xiii. 1); *ἦγον Ἰουδαίων οἱ δυνατοί* ('Bell. Jud.,' i. xii. 4), etc. (see 1 Cor. i. 26; Rev. vi. 15; and the passages from Thucydides, Xenophon, and Philo, quoted by Kuinoel). The rendering of the A.V., though defensible, is less natural and less in accordance with the genius of the language. Amiss; *ἄτοπον*, but many manuscripts omit *ἄτοπον*, leaving the sense, however, the same.

Ver. 6.—*Not more than eight or en days for more than ten days, A.V. and T.R.; on the morrow for the next day, A.V.; he sat . . . and commanded for sitting . . . commanded, A.V.* On the morrow (see ver. 17). To be brought (*ἀχθῆναι*). The technical word for bringing a prisoner before the judge (ch. vi. 12; xviii. 12; Luke xxi. 12; xxiii. 1, etc.).

Ver. 7.—*Had come down for came down, A.V.; about him for about, A.V.; bringing against him for and laid . . . against Paul, A.V.; charges for complaints, A.V.* Charges; *αἰτιάματα*, only here in the New Testament, and rare in classical Greek. The A.V. "complaints" means in older English exactly the same as "charges" or "accusations" (comp. "plaintiff").

Ver. 8.—*Paul said in his defence for he answered for himself, A.V. and T.R.; nor for neither, A.V.; against for yet against, A.V.; sinned for offended anything, A.V.*

Said in his defence (*ἀπολογουμένου*); *ch. xxiv. 10*, note. The Law . . . the temple, . . . *Cæsar*. The accusations against him fell under these three heads (*ch. xxiv. 5*): he was the ringleader of an unlawful sect; he had profaned the temple; and he had stirred up insurrection against the government among the Jews. The accusations were false under every head.

*Ver. 9.*—*Desiring to gain favour with the Jews for willing to do the Jews a pleasure, A.V.* To gain favour, etc. (see above, *ch. xxiv. 27*, note). It was not unnatural that Festus, ignorant as he still was of Jewish malice and bigotry and violence, in the case of Paul, and anxious to conciliate a people so difficult to govern as the Jews had showed themselves to be, should make the proposal. In doing so he still insisted that the trial should be before him. Before me; *ἐπ' ἐμοῦ*, as *ch. xxiii. 30* and *xxvi. 2*; *ἐν σοῦ* "before thee," viz. King Agrippa in the last case, and Felix in the former. The expression is somewhat ambiguous, and may merely mean that Festus would be present in the court to ensure fair play, while the Sanhedrim judged Paul according to their Law, and so Paul seems, by his answer, to have understood it.

*Ver. 10.*—*But Paul said for then said Paul, A.V.; I am standing for I stand, A.V.; before for at, A.V.; thou also for thou, A.V.* I am standing before *Cæsar's* judgment-seat (*ἑστώς εἰμι*). The judgment-seat of the procurator, who ministered judgment in *Cæsar's* name and by his authority, was rightly called "*Cæsar's* judgment-seat." As a Roman citizen, Paul had a right to be tried there, and not before the Sanhedrim. The pretence that he had offended against the Jewish Law, and therefore ought to be tried by the Jewish court, was a false one, as Festus well knew; for he had the record of the preceding trial before him.

*Ver. 11.*—*If then I am a wrong-doer for for if I be an offender, A.V. and T.R.; and for or, A.V.; if none of those things is true for if there be none of these things, A.V.; can give me up for may deliver me, A.V.* I refuse not; *οὐ παραιτούμαι*. Here only in the Acts, and three times in Luke xiv. Elsewhere, four times in the pastoral Epistles, and twice in Hebrews. Frequent in classical Greek. No man can give me up (*χαρίσασθαι*); as *ver. 16*, "to hand over as a matter of complaisance." St. Paul saw at once the danger he was in from Festus's inclination to curry favour with the Jews. With his usual fearlessness, therefore, and perhaps with the same quickness of temper which made him call Ananias "a whited wall," he said, "No man (not even the mighty Roman governor) may make me over to them at their request, to please them," and

with the ready wit which characterized him, and with a knowledge of the rights which the *Lex Julia*, in addition to other laws, conferred on him as a Roman citizen, he immediately added, I appeal unto *Cæsar*.

*Ver. 12.*—*Thou hast for hast thou? A.V.* and, as far as punctuation is concerned, T.R. The council. Not the members of the Sanhedrim who were present, but his own *consilarii*, or *assessores*, as they were called, in Greek *πρόεδροι*, with whom the Roman governor advised before giving judgment. Unto *Cæsar* shalt thou go. In like manner, Pliny (quoted by Kuinoel) says of certain Christians who had appealed to *Cæsar*, that, "because they were Roman citizens, he had thought it right to send them to Rome for trial" (*Epist.*, x. 97). Festus, though, maybe, rather startled by Paul's appeal, was perhaps not sorry to be thus rid of a difficult case, and at the same time to leave the Jews under the impression that he himself was willing to send the prisoner for trial to Jerusalem, had it been possible.

*Ver. 13.*—*Now when certain days were passed for and after certain days, A.V.; Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at for King Agrippa and Bernice came unto, A.V.; and saluted for to salute, A.V. and T.R.* Agrippa the king. Herod Agrippa II., son of Herod Agrippa I. (*ch. xii.*), and consequently brother of Drusilla (*ch. xxiv. 24*). He was only seventeen at his father's death, and so not considered by Claudius a safe person to entrust his father's large dominions to. But he gave him Chalcis, and afterwards, in exchange for it, other dominions. It was he who made Ismael the son of Phabi high priest, and who built the palace at Jerusalem which overlooked the temple, and gave great offence to the Jews. He was the last of the Herods, and reigned above fifty years. Bernice was his sister, but was thought to be living in an incestuous intercourse with him. She had been the wife of her uncle Herod, Prince of Chalcis; and on his death lived with her brother. She then for a while became the wife of Polemo, King of Cilicia, but soon returned to Herod Agrippa. She afterwards became the mistress of Vespasian and of Titus in succession (Alford). And saluted; *ἀσπασόμενοι*, which reading Meyer and Alford both retain. The reading of the R.T. is *ἀσπασμένοι*. It is quite in accordance with the position of a dependent king, that he should come and pay his respects to the new Roman governor at *Cæsarea*.

*Ver. 14.*—*As they tarried for when they had been, A.V.: laid for declared, A.V.; case for cause, A.V.; before for unto, A.V.; a prisoner for in bonds, A.V.* Many days (*πλείους ἡμέρας*). Not necessarily many, but as *ch. xxiv. 17* (margin), "some," or "several."

The number indicated by the comparative degree, *πλείων*, depends upon what it is compared with. Here it means more days than was necessary for fulfilling the purpose of their visit, which was to salute Festus. They stayed on some days longer. Laid Paul's case before the king; *ἀνέθετο τὰ κατὰ τὸν Παῦλον*. The word only occurs in the New Testament here and in Gal. ii. 2, "I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles." In 2 Macc. iii. 9, *Ἀνέθετο περὶ τοῦ γερονότου ἐμφανισμοῦ*, "Heliodorus laid before the high priest Onias the information that had been given about the treasure in the temple" (see other passages quoted by Kuinoel). The word might be rendered simply "told," the thing told being in the accusative, and the person to whom it is told in the dative. It was very natural that Festus should take the opportunity of consulting Agrippa, a Jew, and expert in all questions of Jewish Law, about Paul's cause.

Ver. 15.—*Asking for sentence for desiring to have judgment*, A.V. and T.R. The chief priests (ver. 2, note). Informed me (see above, ver. 2, and ch. xxiv. 1, note).

Ver. 16.—*That it is for it is*, A.V.; *custom for manner*, A.V.; *to give up for to deliver . . . to die*, A.V. and T.R.; *the accused for which is accused*, A.V.; *have had opportunity to make his defence concerning the matter for have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime*, A.V. To give up (above, ver. 11, note). Have had opportunity to make his defence (*τόπον ἀπολογίας λάβοι*); see ch. xxii. 1, note.

Ver. 17.—*When therefore for therefore, when*, A.V.; *together here for hither*, A.V.; *I made no delay for without any delay*, A.V.; *but on the next day for on the morrow*, A.V.; *sat down for I sat*, A.V.; *brought for brought forth*, A.V. To be brought (above, ver. 6).

Ver. 18.—*Concerning for against*, A.V.; *no charge for none accusation*, A.V.; *evil things for things*, A.V. and T.R. They brought no charge. The expression, common in classical writers, *ἐπιφέρειν αἰτίαν*, answers to the Latin legal phrase, *crimen inferre* (Cicero, 'Contra Verrem,' v. 41; 'Ad Herenn.,' iv. 35). Such evil things as I supposed; viz. seditions, insurrections, murders, and such like, which were so rife at this time.

Ver. 19.—*Religion for superstition*, A.V.; *who for which*, A.V. Certain questions (*ζητήματα*); ch. xv. 2; xviii. 15; xxiii. 29, etc. Religion (*θεοσιδαιμονία*); see ch. xvii. 22, *δαισιδαιμονοτέρους*, where there is the same doubt as here whether to take it in a good sense or a bad one. Here, as Festus, a man of the world, was speaking to a king who was a Jew, he is not likely to have intended to use an offensive phrase. So it is best to render it "religion," as the R.V. does. But

Bishop Wordsworth renders *τῆς ἰδίας δαισιδαιμονίας* his own superstition, Paul's, which agrees with the context. These details must have been among those "complaints" spoken of in ver. 7. Whom Paul affirmed to be alive. Notice the stress constantly laid by the apostle upon the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. If his own superstition is the right rendering, we have here the nature of it, in Festus's view, belief in the resurrection of Jesus.

Ver. 20.—*I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked for because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him*, A.V. and T.R. I, being perplexed, etc. The *ζήτησις* spoken of by Festus does not mean his own judicial inquiry, though it is so used once in Polybius (vi. xvi. 2), but the disputes or discussions on such subjects as the Resurrection, etc. (John iii. 25; 1 Tim. i. 4; vi. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 23; Titus iii. 9), in which Festus felt himself at a loss. The A.V., therefore, expresses the sense more nearly than the R.V. The T.R. too, which inserts *εἰς* before *τὴν περὶ τούτων ζήτησιν*, is preferable to the R.T., because *ἀποροῦμαι* does not govern an accusative case, but is almost always followed by a preposition. Those who follow the reading of the T.R., *περὶ τούτου*, either understand *πράγματος* or refer *τούτου* to Paul or to Jesus.

Ver. 21.—*To be kept for the decision of the emperor for to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus*, A.V.; *should for might*, A.V. The decision; *διαγνώσις*, here only in the New Testament; but it is used in this sense in Wisd. iii. 18 ("the day of trial," or "hearing," A.V.), and by Josephus ('Ant. Jud.,' xv. iii. 8). For the verb *διαγνώσκειν*, see ch. xxiii. 15; xxiv. 22, notes. The emperor (*τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ*); rather, as the A.V., *Augustus*. *Augustus* was the title conferred by the senate upon Octavius Cæsar, B.C. 27, whom we commonly designate *Augustus Cæsar*. It became afterwards the distinctive title of the reigning emperor, and, after the end of the second century, sometimes of two or even three co-emperors, and was now borne by Nero. Its Greek equivalent was *Σεβαστός*. *Augustus* may be derived, as Ovid says, from *augere*, as *fuistis* from *faveo*, and be kindred with *augur*, and mean one blest and aggrandized of God, and so, full of majesty. It is spoken of all holy things, temples and the like, "Et quodcumque sua Jupiter augeat opes" (Ovid, 'Fast.,' l. 609); and, as Ovid says in the same passage, is a title proper to the gods. For, comparing it with the names of the greatest Roman families, Maximus, Magnus, Torquatus, Corvus, etc., their names, he says, bespeak human honours, but of Augustus, he says, "Hic socium summo cum Jove nomen habet." And so the Greek *Σεβαστός* bespeaks a veneration



closely akin to adoration. Cæsar, originally the name of a family of the Julia gens, became the name of Octavius Cæsar Augustus, as the adopted son of Julius Cæsar; then of Tiberius, as the adopted son of Augustus; and then of the successors of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, who had by descent or adoption some relationship to C. Julius Cæsar the great dictator. After Nero, succeeding emperors usually prefixed the name of Cæsar to their other names, and placed that of Augustus after them. Ælius Verus, adopted by Hadrian, was the first person who bore the name of Cæsar without being emperor. From this time it became usual for the heir to the throne to bear the name; and later, for many of the emperor's kindred to be so-called. It was, in fact, a title of honour conferred by the emperor.

Ver. 22.—*And for then, A.V.; I also could wish to hear for I would also hear, A.V.; saith for said, A.V.* I also could wish (ἐβουλόμην); but the A.V. "I would" quite sufficiently expresses the imperfect tense (ἐὼς ᾤκνῳ) and the indirect wish intended. Meyer well compares ᾤκνῳ (Rom. ix. 3) and ἤθελον (Gal. iv. 20).

Ver. 23.—*So for and, A.V.; they were for was, A.V.; the principal for principal, A.V.; the command of Festus for Festus' commandment, A.V.; brought in for brought forth, A.V.* With great pomp; μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, here only in the New Testament. In Polybius it means "display," "show," "outward appearance," "impression," "effect," and the like. It is of frequent use among medical writers for the outward appearance of diseases. In Heb. xii. 21 τὸ φανταζόμενον is "the appearance," and φάντασμα (Matt. xiv. 26; Mark vi. 49) is "an appearance," "a phantom." The place of hearing. The word ἀκροατήριον (from ἀκροδομαι, to hear, whence ἀκροάτης, Rom. ii. 13; Jas. i. 22, 23, 25) occurs only here in the New Testament. It is literally an "audience-hall," and means sometimes a "lecture-room." Here it is apparently the hall where cases were heard and tried before the procurator or other magistrate. Chief captains (χιλίαρχοι). Military tribunes, as ch. xxi. 31, and very frequently in the Acts. Meyer notes that, as there were five cohorts garrisoned in Cæ-area, there would be five chiliarchs, or tribunes. At the command of Festus. These minute touches suggest that St. Luke was most likely in the hall, and saw the "great pomp," and heard Festus give the order for Paul to be brought. Brought in (ἤχθη); see ver. 6, note.

Ver. 24.—*Saith for said, A.V.; beheld for saw, A.V.; made suit to me for have dealt with me, A.V.; here for also here, A.V.* That he ought not to live (ch. xii. 22) This had evidently been repeated by the

Jews before Festus himself (ver. 7), and implied by Paul's words in ver. 11.

Ver. 25.—*I found . . . I determined for when I found . . . I have determined, A.V. and T.R.; as for that, A.V. and T.R. appealed for hath appealed, A.V.; the emperor for Augustus, A.V.* Nothing worthy of death (see ch. xxiii. 29; and comp. Luke xxiii. 4, 15). I determined. The A.V., "when I found . . . I have determined," is hardly good grammar according to our present usage. It should be "determined," unless "when" is equivalent to "inasmuch as." If "when" expresses a point of past time from which the act of determining started, the perfect is improper in modern English. The same remark applies to the next verse, "I have brought him forth . . . that I might."

Ver. 26.—*King for O king, A.V.; may for might, A.V.* My lord (τῷ κυρίῳ). Suetonius tells us ('Life of Augustus,' 53) that Augustus abhorred the title of "lord," and looked upon it as a curse and an insult when applied to himself. Tiberius also ('Life of Tiberius,' 27), being once called "lord" (dominus) by some one, indignantly repudiated the title. But it was frequently applied to Trajan by Pliny, and the later emperors seem to have accepted it. It was likely to grow up first in the East. Examination; ἀνακρίσεις, here only in the New Testament; but it is found in 3 Macc. vii. 4 in the same sense as here, viz. of a judicial examination (the complaint being that Jews were put to death ἀνε πάσης ἀνακρίσεως καὶ ἐξετάσεως); specially the previous examination of the prisoner made for the information of the judge who was to try the case. At Athens the ἀνάκρισις was a preliminary examination held to decide whether an action at law should be allowed. The verb ἀνακρίνω, to examine, occurs six times in the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts (Luke xxiii. 14; ch. iv. 9; xii. 19, etc.), and ten times in St. Paul's Epistles (see also Hist. of Susanna 48).

Ver. 27.—*In sending . . . not for to send . . . and not, A.V.; charges for crimes laid, A.V.* Unreasonable; ἄλογον, only in 2 Pet. ii. 12 and Jude 10, "without reason," applied to the brute creation; but found in the LXX. of Exod. vi. 12 and Wisd. xi. 15; and also frequent in medical writers. The opposite phrase, κατὰ λόγον, "reasonably," in ch. xviii. 14, is also of very frequent use in medical writers. Ἀλογος, ἄλογος, ἀλογία are also not uncommon in Polybius, and in classical Greek generally. The charges against him (τὰς κατ' αὐτοῦ αἰτίας). The technical legal term for the "accusation" or "charge" formally made against the prisoner, and which was to form the subject of the trial (comp. Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26)

## HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—12.—Persistent hatred.** There is a bitterness and a dogged persistency in the enmity of an Oriental, and an inextinguishable thirst for revenge, which are unlike anything we know of among ourselves. Some knowledge and perception of this are necessary to enable us to understand many things in the Old Testament, including allusions to his enemies in some of the Psalms of David. The conduct of the Jews to St. Paul is a remarkable example of this persevering hatred, which nothing could avert or mollify. Passing over the previous displays of it at every place in Asia and Europe where the apostle preached the gospel, from the first outbreak of it at Damascus to the last conspiracy against him at Corinth (ch. ix. 23; xx. 3), we notice the allusion to its existence, and to the cause of it, by James in ch. xxi. 21. We then saw the steps taken by St. Paul to conciliate those enemies, and to convince them that their prejudice against him was unfounded. But how vain these efforts were soon appears. In the very temple court where he was taking pains to humour their prejudices and to soften their hatred, that hatred broke out into a flame of unparalleled violence. In an instant the whole city was upon him, and would have torn him to pieces had not the Roman soldiers rescued him from their hands. A momentary lull while they listened to Paul's Hebrew speech was followed by a more furious burst of passion than before. When violence had failed to take away the hated life, they had recourse to guile and to the arts of the secret assassin. Baffled again at Jerusalem, they followed him to Cæsarea. They hired an advocate to vilify him before the Roman judge. They heaped charge upon charge and lie upon lie in hope to compass his condemnation, and when for two whole years their malice had been defeated, while the object of their hatred remained a prisoner out of their reach, and at a time when the miseries of their country called for all their attention and solicitude, far from time having dulled the edge of their malice, or the calls of patriotism having diverted their thoughts from the object of their revenge, they were more intent than ever upon Paul's destruction. Their first thought on the change of government seems to have been, not thankfulness for the cessation of the oppressive tyranny of Felix, but the hope of working upon the inexperience of Festus so as to get Paul into their power. Again the baffled assassins were ready to fall upon the doomed man by the way; again the restless hatred of the chief priests carried them to Cæsarea to try what false accusations could bring about. But this spectacle of unwearied and unscrupulous hatred and persistent malice, hideous as it is, acquires a value of its own when we contrast with it the love and the kindness of the gospel of Christ. Whence must those precepts of patience and forgiveness and love for our enemies have sprung, which shine like precious jewels in the pages of the Bible? Or look at St. Paul. He was a Jew like them: were they Hebrews? so was he. And yet, while they were cursing, and conspiring, and persecuting, and blaspheming, he was loving, enduring, forgiving, striving to overcome evil with good. They were moving heaven and earth to take away his life who had never done them any wrong; and his heart's desire and prayer to God for them, his cruel persecutors, and the labour of his whole life as well, was that they might be saved. It is a wonderful contrast. It sets out the Divine origin of the gospel and its heavenly character with singular force. It is a most luminous comment on our Lord's words, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above" (John viii. 23). The bright star of love shines all the brighter in our eyes from being thus, as it were, surrounded by the thick darkness of a persistent hatred.

**Vers. 13—27.—"Audi alteram partem."** It is a noble principle here ascribed by Festus to Roman justice, never to condemn upon the accusation of any one without giving the accused the power to face his accusers and answer for himself. English law is so conspicuous for its fairness to prisoners that there is no need to insist upon this maxim in regard to courts of justice. But there is great need to urge that the same just principle should rule our private censures and judgments upon our neighbours. It should not be the manner of Christians to believe evil of others, still less to spread reports against them, upon one-sided statements and undefended charges. An accused person has a right to defend himself before he is condemned. A fair judge will suspend his judgment till he has heard the defence. The English law is unwilling to condemn

except upon the clearest evidence of guilt. Let there be the same unwillingness to censure a neighbour unless blame be unavoidable. Some charges are made in malice, some in ignorance; some things are positively false; some are true, but lose their truth by being separated from their concomitants; some things are bad if done from one motive, but good if done from another; an explanation may make the whole difference in the aspect of an action. Therefore it should be a settled principle with every just man to condemn no man unheard, even in thought, and to give every one against whom a charge is made an opportunity of defence before the charge is believed to his hurt, or acted upon to his prejudice. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned."

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—16.**—*The enlightened, the unenlightened, and the great Overruler.* This piece of sacred history suggests—

I. THAT SOMETIMES THE BLACKEST DEEDS LIE AT THE DOOR OF THE ENLIGHTENED. Who more enlightened than these Jews, so far as outward privileges were concerned? They had the fullest opportunity of knowing the truth and of acting uprightly. They "had the mind" of God; revelation had shone on their path with full, strong light. Yet we find them (vers. 2, 3) endeavouring to get Paul into their power, that they might deliberately assassinate him. And we again find them fiercely preferring charges against him which they could not prove (ver. 7). And again we find them demanding judgment against him when no crime had been established (ver. 15). In how dark a light does their action appear! The men that would have shuddered at a small and venial impropriety or omission do not scruple to do rank injustice, to commit murder! They were neither the first nor the last to make this fatal mistake (Luke xi. 42; Matt. vii. 21—23). There have been, and are, many souls who have accounted themselves, and have been reckoned by others, peculiarly holy, at whose door lie the most serious sins, who are living lives utterly evil in God's sight, and who will awake to condemnation and retribution at the last (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24).

II. THAT SOMETIMES THE UNENLIGHTENED EXHIBIT ADMIRABLE VIRTUES. The Roman had been far less favoured than the Jew in the great matter of religious privilege. Not unto him had been "committed the oracles of God;" not to him had psalmists sung and prophets prophesied. Yet we find the Roman sometimes exhibiting virtue of an excellent order. We find this here. Festus, indeed, desired to "do the Jews a pleasure" (ver. 9). What governor would not? But he did not commit any act of illegality or injustice in order to do this, and we find him on two occasions resolutely declining to yield to pressure when he could not do so without departing from fairness (vers. 4, 5, 15, 16). This worthiness of behaviour may have been due to respect for law rather than regard for individual right; but it was honourable and excellent, as far as it went. The self-control it indicates contrasts strongly with the abandonment to passionate hatred which disgraced the Jews. Virtue is sometimes found unassociated with religion. (1) It may be the indirect and unconscious result of religious influence; (2) or it may be the outgrowth of nobility of nature originally bestowed by the Creator; (3) or it may be the lingering consequence of early habits in which the life was trained. In any case, not rooted in religion it is (a) unsatisfactory to God in its nature, and it is (b) uncertain in its duration. All moral excellency should be built on spiritual convictions. Then, and then only, is it pleasing to God and certain to endure.

III. THAT DIVINE PROVIDENCE IS PRESIDING OVER ALL EVENTS. Had Festus, "willing to do the Jews a pleasure," consented to Paul's being brought to Jerusalem (ver. 3), he would have fallen a victim to their murderous machinations. Then the Church of Christ would never have had some of those Epistles which now enrich our sacred literature, and which we could ill spare from the sacred volume. But "*his hour was not yet come*"—his hour of martyrdom, his hour of holy triumph, his hour of deliverance and redemption. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," and vainly is the persecutor's arm uplifted if God does not mean that the blow shall fall. So with all events. The Divine Overruler is "shaping the ends" of all things,



directing the course and tracing the bound of our activities, compelling even the wrath of man to praise him, conducting all things to a rightful and blessed issue.—C.

**Vers. 17—21.—*Mismeasurement of the great and small.*** There is something ludicrous as well as instructive in the scene which Festus here describes to Agrippa. Nothing could well be more incongruous than a Roman judge presiding at a tribunal before which “niceties of the Jewish religion” were brought up. He would feel utterly unsuited for the work, and he gladly enough availed himself of the presence of Agrippa to gain some notion of the subject which had so completely perplexed him. It appeared to him that the men over whom he was called to rule were permitting themselves to be passionately absorbed by questions not worthy of a moment’s consideration. It probably also occurred to him that one at least was strikingly and unaccountably indifferent to those things to which alone he himself attached importance. How thoroughly he mismeasured everything we see if we consider—

**I. THAT HIS OWN POSITION AS PROCURATOR OF JUDEA WAS A MATTER OF THE LEAST IMPORTANCE.** Doubtless to him that seemed the one substantial fact in comparison with which “certain questions of the superstition” (religion) of the Jews and of “one Jesus” were small indeed. Now, we are only interested in Festus because of his accidental association with these questions. But for this connection not one in a thousand who now know something about him would have even heard of his name. How important to each one of us seem his own personal affairs—his income, his position, his reputation, his property! In how brief a time will these things be as nothing—his possessions scattered, his name forgotten, his office handed over to another! It would do us all good to be occasionally asking of ourselves—What will be the value of the things we prize so highly “when a few years are come”?

**II. THAT MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE HEBREW FAITH ARE OF NO SLIGHT IMPORTANCE.** “Certain questions of the religion” of the Jews would seem very trivial to a Roman ruler. But we know that they are worthy of the attention of mankind. Not only the great question of the Jewish Messiahship, but other and inferior matters respecting sacrifices and ordinances, have a place in our record which has outlived and will outlive proudest dynasties and mightiest empires. Students will read and investigate Leviticus and Deuteronomy when the annals of the empire are disregarded. Everything which bears on our relation to God, and everything which is even remotely related to that “one Jesus,” has an interest which will not die.

**III. THAT THE “ONE JESUS,” TO WHOM FESTUS SO SLIGHTINGLY ALLUDED, WAS THE DESTINED SOVEREIGN OF THE RACE.** Nothing could exceed the contemptuous indifference with which Festus speaks of the Saviour (ver. 19). Nothing was further from his thought than that this One would live for ever in the honour and love of the world. But the Stone which the Jewish builders refused has become the Headstone of the corner, and the Prisoner whom the Roman soldiers crowned and clothed in cruel mockery now reigns in such majesty and wields such power as golden wreath and imperial purple will not symbolize at all. He who was dead, and whom Paul, the prisoner, so innocently and unaccountably “affirmed to be alive,” is now worshipped as the risen, the reigning, the living Lord and Sovereign of mankind. How have Procurator and Malefactor changed places! How has the first become the last, and the last become the first! Let us (1) rejoice in the exaltation of our once crucified Lord; (2) bless God for the exaltation of many of his servants, once held in disregard or derision and afterwards honoured; (3) hope and strive for our own exaltation; for to the humblest servant of the Saviour there is the prospect of a throne of honour, a crown of glory, a sphere of blessedness and usefulness (2 Tim. ii. 12; iv. 8; Rev. iii. 21).—C.

**Vers. 22—27.—*Power, degeneracy, and consecration.*** That was a striking scene which is suggested to our imagination by these verses. The sacred narrative does not, indeed, waste words on a description of it, but it supplies enough to place the picture before our eyes (see Farrar’s ‘Life of St. Paul,’ *in loc.*). It invites our attention to three subjects. We have—

**I. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF WORLDLY POWER.** “At Festus’s commandment” (ver. 23). The Roman procurator may not have been present with “great pomp,” but he could afford to dispense with glitter and show; for he had authority in his hand—he

represented the power of the world. He was a citizen of the kingdom which had "in it of the strength of iron" (Dan. ii. 41). He was a successor of another Roman who had lately said, confidently enough, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" (John xix. 10). As a Roman ruler, he felt that he held a sway over those around him, to which they could lay no claim and which they were unable to disturb. Human power is: 1. Coveted by many thousands. 2. Within the reach of very few; it is therefore continually sought and missed, and the failure to attain it is a source of a large amount of human disappointment and unhappiness. 3. Much less enjoyed, when realized, than its possessor anticipated; for it proves to be limited and checked by many things invisible from without, but painful and irritating when discovered and endured. 4. Soon laid down again. The breath which makes can unmake; men are often giddy on the height and they stagger and fall; years of busy activity quickly pass, and then comes sovereign death which strikes down power beneath its feet.

II. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF SPIRITUAL DEGENERACY. (Ver. 23.) Both brother and sister, Agrippa and Bernice, were instances of this. They "saw the better thing and approved; they followed the worse." They "believed the prophets" (ch. xxvi. 27); they knew the holy Law of God, but, instead of keeping it, instead of living before God and before the world in piety, in purity, in heavenly wisdom, they sacrificed everything to worldly advancement, to earthly honours, and even to unholy pleasure. How pitiable they seem to us now! That "great pomp" of theirs does but serve to make their moral littleness the more conspicuous. To rise in outward rank or wealth at the expense of character and by forfeiture of principle is: 1. Grievous in the sight of God. 2. Painful to all those whose judgment is worth regarding. 3. A most wretched mistake, as well as a sin. 4. An act, or series of acts, on which the agents will one day look back with deep and terrible remorse.

III. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRISTIAN CONSECRATION. "Paul was brought forth" (ver. 23), he "had committed nothing worthy of death" (ver. 25), but yet "all the multitude of the Jews" (ver. 24) were "crying out that he ought not to live any longer." By his attachment to the truth and his devotion to the cause of Jesus Christ, he had placed himself there in captivity, charged with a capital offence, the object of the most bitter resentment of his countrymen. He had done nothing to deserve this; he had only taught what he honestly and rightly believed to be the very truth of God. He accepted his position, as a persecuted witness for Christ, with perfect resignation; he would not, on any consideration, have changed places with that Roman judge or those Jewish magnates. Christian consecration is: 1. An admirable thing, on which the minds of the worthiest will ever delight to dwell, lifting its subject far above the level of earthly power or worldly dignity. 2. Acceptable service in the estimation of Christ; to it the fullest Divine approval and the largest share of heavenly reward are attached.—C.

Vers. 1—12.—*Tenacity in right.* Paul is brought before a fresh judge. He defends the principles of duty and right in the same spirit as before, with perfect boldness, as the state of the matter demands, and at the same time with due respect to the office of the judge.

I. CONSTANCY IN THE DEFENCE OF RIGHT. Let us view this in contrast: 1. *To the audacity of the hypocrite.* They brought many and heavy charges against Paul, which they were unable to prove. Again, "the servant is as his Lord." The substance of the charges, too, ever the same: transgression of the Law, desecration of the temple, revolt against the emperor. Simple and sincere is the defence, in both cases (comp. ver. 8 with John xviii. 20, 21). 2. *To the insolence of the knave.* Paul refuses no legal investigation. He stands firmly on the constitution of the state, before the tribunal of Cæsar. The "powers that be" he taught were divinely ordained for the repression of evil-doers and the defence of the righteous. 3. *To the obstinacy of the contentious man.* He willingly subjects himself to any fair investigation and just decision of his case.

II. THE APPEAL TO THE EMPEROR. Some general allegorical lessons may be derived from this. The Christian may and should appeal: 1. From the sentence of the unjust man to the judgment of the just. 2. From the passions of the moment to the calm verdict of posterity. 3. From the opinions of the external world to the testimony of the inner world of conscience. 4. From the human tribunal to the eternal throne.

And as to the decision : " To Cæsar thou shalt go ! " It was partly Festus's, partly Paul's, and above all, that of Providence. So in our own life-crises. There is a coincidence of our own wishes with the external decision of another. Below or above both is the divinity that shapes our ends, the hand of him who causes all things to work together for good.—J.

**Vers. 13—27.—Worldly judgment on religious matters. I. ITS SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS.** It sees no further than the principles of civil right (vers. 13—18). Herod Agrippa II. had come to pay his greeting to the new procurator (see Josephus, 'Life,' § 11; and 'Bell. Jud.,' ii. 1). It was only after Agrippa had arrived some days, that Festus seized the opportunity of bringing the matter before him, probably hoping, from his acquaintance with Jewish affairs, that he would help him to a decision concerning Paul. Festus states the rule of equity, the Roman custom of impartiality (ver. 16). He makes a parade of justice, but his secret feelings are hardly in harmony with his profession. He wanted to be popular with the Jews (ver. 9), and was only withheld by Paul's appeal to Cæsar from sending him to Jerusalem. Festus would trim his sails to the wind. He is worldly in purpose, but would act on plausible grounds and render the show of the forms of justice.

**II. ITS CONTEMPTUOUS ATTITUDE TOWARDS RELIGION. (Vers. 19—21.)** The word used by him is literally, "fear of divinity," not necessarily conveying the contemptuous sense of "superstition." But his whole tone is that of contempt : "Concerning one Jesus, who had died, whom Paul said was living." He looks upon the turning-point of Paul's preaching and of his contest with the Jews as a trifling matter, unworthy the serious consideration of educated men. And yet—apart from mere personal opinion—how much in the history of the world has turned upon this question! Agrippa's family had had much to do with "this Jesus," and the mention of his Name is like a renewed solicitation to the heart of the king. Festus's bearing is that of a man who rather prides himself upon superiority to all religious and ecclesiastical matters; and perhaps no wonder, considering the mixture of religions in the Roman world of the time.

**III. ITS IDLE CURIOSITY.** This is represented by the bearing of Agrippa (ver. 22). He would like to listen to this remarkable prisoner, and his story and confession of faith. And, perhaps, there was something more than curiosity—a gleam of higher interest, a presentiment of the truth. The next day Agrippa and his sister enter the audience-chamber of Festus with great pomp, which is soon to pale before the simple majesty of the Divine Word and its messenger.

**IV. ITS WANT OF INTELLIGENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL CHARACTER.** "Behold the man!" (ver. 24; comp. John xix. 5). Brought before Agrippa, as Pilate had sent Jesus to Herod (Luke xxiii. 7). It justly seems to the statesman unreasonable to send a prisoner without stating the charges against him (ver. 27). But statesmanship got the better of fairness in the case of Pilate (Matt. xxiii. 3). Unless rulers take care to make themselves fully acquainted with the facts, the show of fairness goes for nothing. How can a man without sympathy for conscientious convictions in religion, judge justly of a man who professes them? Here, then, worldly judgment is called to pronounce on facts which resist the judgment of the world. The hall at Cæsarea is the scene of pompous worldly display, soon to be converted into the place of bearing of holy doctrine, and a judgment-seat of the Divine majesty.—J.

**Vers. 1—12.—The way opened to Rome. I. A WAY WHICH HAD TO BE CUT THROUGH JEWISH CRAFT AND MALICE ON THE ONE HAND, AND ROMAN INDIFFERENCE AND AVARICE ON THE OTHER.** Festus : a true heathen, ignorant, worldly, ready to use power for self-aggrandizement, hating the provincial strifes. The Jews : inveterate haters, keeping up their spite for two years; subtle-minded plotters, using Festus's visit to Jerusalem to get Paul into their power; absolutely unprincipled and false, ready to perjure themselves; and shameless in their fanaticism.

**II. PROVIDENTIAL INTERPOSITION TO REMOVE OBSTACLES.** Festus desired to remain but a short time in Jerusalem. Felix had probably left information which induced him to be cautious in dealing with Paul. Roman pride was roused by the transparent hypocrisy of the Jews. A rebuff of the Jewish leaders at the onset might be of service in ruling the province.



**III. THE APPEARANCE OF PAUL IN COURT** won upon the ruler's mind, and helped him to listen respectfully to his assertion of innocence. But the critical point was the reference of the case to Roman justice as such. Festus was forgetting himself; Paul brought him back to his duty, "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat." One stroke of honest truth smites down a host of lies (cf. Luther at Worms). The assessors were at hand. Festus might have done wrong had he been by himself, but with his council to bear witness, his own life was at stake. "Appeal unto Cæsar" was the gate at last opened, and no man could shut it. There was a voice speaking to Paul which he knew could command Rome itself to obey.—R.

**Vers. 13—27.—Paul in the presence of King Agrippa. I. A GREAT OPPORTUNITY** for the Christian CHARACTER to be shown forth, as unabashed in the presence of worldly splendour, as simple-minded and modest, as untempted by that fear of man which bringeth a snare.

**II. AN OCCASION** eagerly seized by the apostle FOR TEACHING both the heathen and the Jew, that the gospel was not a mere idle question, or fanatical dream, or delusion, but a great reality, for which its preacher was ready to die if need be.

**III. A STRIKING CONTRAST** between the spiritually minded Jew, and the apostate and mere worldling, such as Agrippa.

**IV. A PROVIDENTIAL PREPARATION** for the future. The examination would both remove prejudice against Paul and put the whole matter more favourably before the emperor, where mere Jewish bigotry and intolerance would have little weight.—R.

**Vers. 10, 11.—Courage to live.** Paul knows that he is "standing" (see Revised Version) already at the bar of Cæsar. There he elects still to stand. And his formal appeal to Cæsar is but the public and legal registration of his deliberate and decisive choice to that effect. There were, no doubt, two sides to the question that had been before Paul, though it savoured ever so little of the nature of a question with him. The two sides were these—that justice was nearer him when he was before Cæsar than when he might be before them of "Jerusalem;" and that nevertheless to consent to go, and to choose to go, to Cæsar, to Rome, and to the likeliest prospect of justice, begged, in Paul's special case and character, very real courage—the courage to live. Notice, then, that the decision recorded in these verses was the decision of—

**I. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF INNOCENCE.** It is not unfrequently the case, in instances that do not touch the question of life, but do touch those of principle and duty, that even conscious innocence prefers the easier path of non-resistance and non-defence, when resistance and self-defence would be the right course. Nature, beyond a doubt, should often be mortified. But there is a nature also which should be observed and followed and obeyed. To stand up for one's own innocence is sometimes to stand up for all innocence.

**II. CHRISTIAN PATIENCE.** The Christian soldier, racer, workman, must fight to the end, must run to the goal, must labour till the nightfall. And this requires sometimes great *patience*. With Paul and others of the early Christians, whose names are now nowhere else but in that best place—"the book of life," this was true to such an extent, that a Divine maxim became formulated in Scripture for the behoof of it, and so it was written, "For ye have need of patience, that, *after ye have done* the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. x. 36). Paul must have often felt, what he once said, "To depart and be with Christ were far better." Many a craven spirit faints. Many fail long before they have "resisted unto blood."

**III. CHRISTIAN WISDOM.** The true apostle, of whatever day, will consider many a question, *not* in its reference to his own individuality, but in its bearing upon the cause he has at heart. Many herein may err, therefore, "lacking wisdom." Paul saw that it was wisdom's dictate not to allow himself and his cause to be baffled. Let alone other aspects of the case, it was policy, and a right and holy policy to appeal to Cæsar.

**IV. CHRISTIAN DUTY.** There yet awaited Paul some of the grandest opportunities of usefulness, all along the way to Rome and in Rome. His bonds were to be manifest "in the palace and in all other places" (Phil. i. 13). He was to gain many converts even "of Cæsar's household." A "great door and effectual" was yet to be opened before him and the gospel he preached and loved so well, so faithfully. So it was duty to

stand to his colours, though men might possibly taunt him that he was rather standing for his life.

V. THE SPIRIT'S OWN GUIDANCE. Already we have once heard that Paul was assured by the angel of the Lord, who stood by him at night, that "at Rome also" he should bear testimony to Jesus, as he had at Jerusalem. It is an infinite satisfaction to the heart's uncertainty, to the occasional distrust that a conscience feels with regard to its own verdicts, when Heaven's guidance is borne in upon one. This satisfaction Paul had. And though the vista which his own choice revealed to him terminated in a very arena of conflict most visible, but its severity, its amount, its terrors unseen, and not to be estimated, yet nor tongue nor heart falters. He appeals to Cæsar, and "if he perish, he will perish" there.—B.

Ver. 19.—*Spiritual deprivation.* The translation which gives us the word "superstition" in this verse of our English Version, cannot be accepted as conveying the meaning of Festus. He would not have spoken of that which was, at all events nominally, the religion of Agrippa, as a "superstition." We may safely adopt the ordinary word "religion"—a word, even from the Jews' point of view, little enough appreciated by a Roman official—as found in the Revised Version. Great as was the practical injustice in some directions of Festus, for instance, in keeping Paul in prison; yet we cannot fail to note a certain truthfulness of his lip. He has already *spoken* sufficiently the acquittal of his prisoner. This he does again, privately, in conversation with Agrippa; and yet again to-morrow, without disguise, in the publicity of the open court. To that same lip it was also given to *utter*, at all events, the central truth about Jesus in his relation to men, however little he believed or understood it. We may notice here—

I. THE WIDE DISTANCE THAT SEPARATES THE MAN WHO HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF REVELATION FROM HIM WHO HAS SOME SUCH KNOWLEDGE. Presumably, Festus had not the slightest inclination to speak slightly to Agrippa of the religion of the Jews of Jerusalem. But nevertheless his tone is that of a man who speaks of what is utterly unintelligible to him. A Roman's worship was a strange thing; his religion a strange product under any circumstances—perhaps in nothing so strange as in this disabling quality of them. But the phenomenon, after all, is most typical. It is typical of all those in their measure, *i.e.* the measure of their time and place in the whole world's history, who are without true revelation. It shows these in the twofold aspect, and apparently contradictory aspects, of believing far too much and far too little. 1. They believe far too much; for they are sure to construct their own superhuman and supernatural. They will have their own pantheon in some sort. 2. And they believe far too little; for the verities of the true revelation of the superhuman and supernatural they are most averse to receive. Be the account of this what it may, it is but the expression of the thing of perpetual recurrence. The domain so wide, so dreary, of superstition lies where ignorance of true revelation is the appointed signal for men to make the materials of revelation unreal and incongruous for themselves. "Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools," not less in what they accept than in what they reject. What a world of thought and feeling, of meaning and of truth, was shut off from Festus, as his present language betrays him! And what a world of thought and feeling, of meaning and of truth, is shut off from any man and every man who is destitute of true revelation! If it have not yet travelled to him, it is at present his mysterious lot. If it have, and he reject it, it is his undeniable folly and guilt. Religion and superstition are not differentiated by one not introducing the supernatural, while the other does introduce it. They both introduce it, and they both earnestly believe in it. They are differentiated in that the one acquaints with what things are real and which it concerns us to know, beyond the ken of mortal eye or reason; but the other offers us imaginations, perhaps in every grotesque form, for truth and stones for bread.

II. BRIEFLY EXPRESSED, THE VITAL FACT OF ALL CHRISTIAN TRUTH, OF ALL CHRISTIAN FAITH, OF ALL CHRISTIAN IMPULSE. "One Jesus, who was dead and whom," now no longer Paul alone, but a vast portion of the world, "affirms to be alive." It were past all his merit that it should be given to the lip of Festus to utter these words, the charter of our faith and hope and religion, that day, and to have them recorded as

his. Yet there they were spoken by him, and here for ever they will lie. The dead and anon living One is the centre of Christian faith, hope, love. It is the description he gives of himself: "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18). Three perennial springs—springs of heavenly truth and influence, issue out of these simplest and coldest words as uttered by Festus. 1. The death of Christ has (1) a *meaning* all its own; (2) a boundless fullness of meaning; (3) an endless continuance of meaning. 2. The life of Christ, after his death, has a very lustre of light for us, if we think of it simply for what it teaches us about himself. It proclaims him, when all is considered, different from *any other*, unique among men, Prince of life, Victor over death. These are his own dignities. He shines wonderful in the midst of them, did we all but worship far away in wonder and admiration but mystery lost. 3. That risen life, and what followed it—the ascended life, have floods of joyful meaning for us, when we remember all that is distinctly revealed as involved in it for mankind and ourselves. (1) He is every way to be trusted, since he has proved himself true herein. (2) He gives us the life he has for himself. (3) He is the very Specimen, the Earnest, the manifest Firstfruits of the life that shall be, for all them that sleep in him. (4) He is *even now*, though invisible, somewhere surely, and mindful of his people, and watchful over them, their one ever-living sympathizing Mediator and High Priest. (5) He lives above, waiting to receive, to judge, and then to bless his own people for ever and ever. Yes, the *vital germs* of all the highest Christian hope and faith lie in the words of Festus.—B.

Ver. 3.—*Seeking favour to cover wicked devices.* Taking advantage of the anxiety to please his new subjects which would characterize the fresh governor, the enemies of St. Paul came to Festus asking a favour; not, however, that they directly asked for what they really wanted. They asked for Paul's trial at a Jerusalem court, where the ecclesiastical offences, with which he was charged, could alone be properly considered. They intended to take advantage of his journey to attack the party and kill Paul—a scheme which only religious bigotry could devise, for it was one which promised little success. Roman soldiers were not wont to lose their prisoners. The incident gives a painful illustration of the miserable servility of religious bigotry. Farrar says, "Festus was not one of the base and feeble procurators who would commit a crime to win popularity. The Palestinian Jews soon found that they had to do with one who more resembled a Gallio than a Felix." "Festus saw through them sufficiently to thwart their design under the guise of a courteous offer that, as Paul was now at Cæsarea, he would return thither almost immediately, and give a full and fair audience to their complaints. On their continued insistence, Festus gave them the haughty and genuinely Roman reply that, whatever their Oriental notions of justice might be, it was not the custom of the Romans to grant any person's life to his accusers by way of doing a favour, but to place the accused and the accusers face to face, and to give the accused a full opportunity for self-defence." Felix may have given Festus some intimation of the enmity felt against this particular prisoner, and some account of the plot to assassinate him, from which he had been preserved by Lysias. Examining the character and schemes of these enemies of St. Paul, we note—

I. **THEIR UNREASONABLE PREJUDICES AGAINST HIM.** They were thoroughly "prejudiced," and religious prejudices are the most blinding and most mischievous that men can take up. No kind of argument, no statements of fact, ever suffice to correct such prejudices, as may be illustrated from both religious and political spheres in our own day. Things corrected or denied a hundred times over, prejudice will persist in believing. When prejudice says, "It must be," all the world may stand in vain and plead, "But it is not." The prejudice of these men declared that Paul had defiled the temple, but he had not; it said that he insulted the honoured system of Moses, but he did not. Their eyes were blinded, their hearts were hardened, and all argument was lost upon them.

II. **PERSONAL FEELING INTENSIFIED RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE.** Recall the scene in the court of the high priest, when the person occupying that office temporarily was reproved by the apostle. Nothing increases the hate in an evil-disposed man like his being publicly reproved or humbled. The Sadducees, who were the party to which the high priest belonged, would consider themselves insulted in the insult offered to him. And



the Pharisee party were, no doubt, intensely annoyed by being drawn, on the same occasion, into a mere theological wrangle, which showed themselves up, and led to their losing their opportunity of killing Paul. So often personal feeling, injured pride, is at the root of religious prejudice and persecution. The fancied loyalty to God of the religious persecutor is really an extravagant anxiety about *self*.

III. FAILURE OF SOME SCHEMES AGGRAVATED THE EVIL PURPOSE. The scheme to kill Paul had been thwarted through Paul's nephew and the Roman officer; but the annoyance of failure prevented their seeing in the failure a rebuke. What the malicious cannot accomplish by open methods they will seek by secret ones, lowering themselves to any depths of meanness to accomplish their ends, even fawning upon new governors and begging personal favours. Beware of the debasing influence of cherished prejudices.—R. T.

Ver. 8.—*Protestations of innocence.* The contrast between the two trials needs careful attention. "On the second occasion, when Paul was tried before Festus, the Jews had no orator to plead for them, so the trial degenerated into a scene of passionate clamour, in which St. Paul simply met the many accusations against him by calm denials." The Jews seem to have brought no witnesses, and the apostle knew well enough that no Roman judge would listen to mere accusations unsupported by testimony. On the one side was accusation without witness; it was enough if, on the other side, there was the plea of "not guilty," and the solemn protestation of innocence. The charges so clamorously made were: 1. Of Paul's *heresy*. He was declared to be a renegade Jew, whose teachings were proving most mischievous, and striking at the very foundations of the Mosaic religious system. St. Paul answered with an emphatic denial. He was but proclaiming those very truths for the sake of which the Mosaic system had been given, and of which it had testified, and for which it had been the preparation. 2. Of Paul's *sacrilege*. This was, in the view of formal religionists, the height of all crime. Their charge rested on a statement of fact: this Paul had brought Trophimus, an Ephesian, into the temple, in order to pollute their temple and offer them an open insult. This Paul simply denied. There was no such fact. He had not brought Trophimus into the temple; and, if the Roman governor took any notice at all of this charge, he would certainly have demanded witnesses to prove the fact, and have thrown the burden of finding the necessary witnesses on the accusers, and not on the prisoner. 3. Of Paul's *treason*. This the Jews could only insinuate, but this point they hoped would especially influence Festus. Such a man must be dangerous to the state; popular tumults have attended his presence in every city where he has gone. He ought not to be set at liberty. Festus was not in the least likely to be frightened into doing an injustice, and could read the character of his prisoner too well to pay any heed to their clamour and their insinuations. "If there was a single grain of truth in the Jewish accusations, Paul had not been guilty of anything approaching to a capital crime." It may be impressed that (1) there are times in a man's life when he is called upon to make a full defence of himself against any charges that may be brought against him. This is especially necessary when the charges take definite shape, and seem to have sanction and support. But (2) there are times in life when a man should attempt no defence, but stand firmly on his plea of innocence, and wait his time for his righteousness to become clear as the noonday. This is best when the charges are vague, and evidently the results of misrepresentation and slander. It is hopeless to attempt the correction of such evils; we can only live them down. Our conduct must depend on the nature of the attack that is made on us. Even if specific charges are made, we may find it wisest to do as the apostle did, and throw the burden of proof altogether upon our accusers.—R. T.

Ver. 11.—*Appeal to Cæsar.* In introducing this subject, the difficulty in which Festus was placed should be shown. His predecessor had just been recalled, through the opposition of these very Jews who were now seeking a favour from him, and to resist them in their first request would be sure to excite a strong prejudice against him. So even Festus attempted the weakness of a compromise. He saw that the matter was not one with which a Roman tribunal could concern itself. It was really a locally religious dispute. So he thought he could meet the case by persuading Paul to go to Jerusalem

to be tried, under the security of his protection. But the apostle knew the Jews much better than Festus did. Perhaps he was quite wearied out with these vain trials and this prolonged uncertainty. It seems that he suddenly made up his mind to claim his right of appeal as a Roman citizen, which would secure him from the machinations of his Jewish enemies. There are times when Christians may appeal to their citizen rights in their defence. This may be illustrated from such a case as that of the Salvation Army, and their right of procession through the streets. In times of religious persecution men have properly found defence and shelter in a demand for legal and political justice. Their hope has often lain in having their cases removed from the heated passionate atmospheres of religious courts to the calm atmospheres of strictly legal ones, though even our law-courts do not always keep due calmness when questions related to religion are brought before them. In this incident we may notice—

**I. ST. PAUL'S SAFETY AS A ROMAN.** Explain the privileges of Roman citizenship. No governor could give him up to the Jews apart from his own consent (ver. 16). Recall the circumstances under which Paul's citizenship had proved his defence.

**II. ST. PAUL'S RIGHT AS A ROMAN PRISONER.** A right of appeal from any inferior to the supreme court at Rome over which the emperor presided. Theoretically, this was a safeguard to justice, but in practice it proved rather a furtherance of injustice. The apostle was not likely to know all that was involved in his appeal. "There is obviously something like a sneer in the procurator's acceptance of St. Paul's decision. He knew, it may be, better than the apostle to what kind of judge the latter was appealing, what long delays there would be before the cause was heard, how little chance there was of a righteous judgment at last." The appeal must have been a surprise to all who heard it. (1) To Paul's friends, who lost the last hope of having him released to them. (2) To Paul's enemies, who knew that he was now altogether beyond their reach. And (3) to Festus, who felt that the prisoner recognized his inability to follow out what he knew to be the right, and who could not help being ashamed of his suggested weak compromise. Still, in this we may feel that the apostle was divinely directed, according to the promise, "It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak." Through this appeal Providence opened the way for what seemed to be an unlikely, and indeed almost an impossible, thing, that St. Paul should see Rome, and even dwell there as a Christian teacher. We are often showing that circumstances work out Divine providences; we need also to see that the *free actions* of men, freely taken, work out the Divine providences quite as certainly.—R. T.

**Vers. 18, 19.—Party accusations.** From Festus we learn what were the accusations made against the apostle by his Jewish enemies, and we see plainly that they cared only for the interests of party, not for the *truth*. It becomes evident that the point of difficulty was our Lord's resurrection, upon which St. Paul always so firmly insisted. That fact is the central fact of Christianity; and upon it the whole scheme of Christian doctrine rests. Note—

**I. WHEREIN PAUL'S ACCUSERS FAILED.** They could not prove any crime that was cognizable by the Roman authorities. They were in danger of being themselves charged with violence done to a Roman citizen.

**II. WHEREIN PAUL'S ACCUSERS WERE WEAK.** They brought before a civil judge only matters of opinion. On these freedom was allowed, so long as that freedom did not lead to acts of rebellion or disorder. They did not even bring matters of opinion that were of public concern, but only such as were made subjects of party contention. Their little *isms* they thought of more importance than the government of the empire. Festus haughtily says that the questions concerned their own superstition.

**III. WHEREIN PAUL'S ACCUSERS CONFIRMED HIS TEACHING.** They set out prominently Paul's great truth, that *Jesus was alive*, and had present power to save. From his enemies we learn what Paul preached—Christ risen; Christ living; Christ saving now. Christ, as "alive from the dead," is declared (1) innocent, (2) accepted, (3) Divine. (4) related to us as Mediator. We know clearly what made the Jewish party so mad against the apostle. No other apostle or disciple had shown, as he had done, what was involved in our Lord's resurrection. Still if our preaching is to be a saving power on men, we must declare Christ risen from the dead, and "able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him."—R. T.

**Ver. 22.—Interest in the prisoner for Christ.** For the necessary accounts of Agrippa and Bernice, see the Expository portions of this Commentary. We only dwell on Agrippa's interest in St. Paul, as giving him an opportunity to preach the gospel before kings. Gerok gives the following outline as suggestive of a descriptive discourse, from which general practical lessons may be drawn:—The audience-chamber of the governor at Cæsarea may be regarded from three points of view.

I. IT WAS A DRAWING-ROOM OF WORLDLY GLORY, by reason of the splendour of the assembled nobility.

II. IT WAS A LECTURE-ROOM OF HOLY DOCTRINE, by reason of the testimony made by the apostle.

III. IT WAS A JUDGMENT-HALL OF DIVINE MAJESTY, by reason of the impression produced by the apostolic discourse. The speech and its effects will be dealt with in the succeeding chapter.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

**Ver. 1.—And for then, A.V.; his for the, A.V.; made his defence for answered for himself, A.V.** Agrippa said. It was by the courtesy of Festus that Agrippa thus took the chief place. It was, perhaps, with the like courtesy that Agrippa said, impersonally, Thou art permitted, without specifying whether by himself or by Festus. Stretched forth his hand. The action of an orator, rendered in this case still more impressive by the chains which hung upon his arms. Luke here relates what he saw. Made his defence (*ἀπελογεῖτο*); ch. xxv. 8; xxiv. 10, note.

**Ver. 2.—That I am to make my defence before thee this day for because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, A.V.; by for of, A.V.**

**Ver. 3.—Thou art expert for I know thee to be expert, A.V. and T.R.** Expert; *γνώστην*, here only in the New Testament, but found in the LXX. (Daniel, i.e. Hist. of Susanna 42) applied to God, *ὁ τῶν κρυπτῶν γνώστης*; and 1 Sam. xxviii. 3 and 2 Kings xxi. 6, as the rendering of *נִבִּיָּא*, a wizard. It is seldom found in classical Greek. According to the R.T., which is that generally adopted (Meyer, Kuinoel, Wordsworth, Alford, etc.), the accusative *γνώστην ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐστὶν* put, by a not uncommon construction, for the genitive absolute, as in Eph. i. 18. The marginal rendering, *because thou art especially expert*, seems preferable to that in the text. Customs and questions. For the use of *ἐθῆ* and *ζητήματα* applied to Jewish customs and controversies, see ch. vi. 14; xvi. 21; xxi. 21, etc.; and ch. xxv. 19, note.

**Ver. 4.—Then from my youth up for from my youth, A.V.; from the beginning for at the first, A.V.; and at for at, A.V. and T.R.** My manner of life, etc. The same testimony of a good conscience as that in ch. xxiii. 1 and xxiv. 16. The word *βίωσις* occurs only here in the New Testament. But we find

the phrase, *τῆς ἐνότητος βίωσις*, “the manner of life according to the Law,” in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus and in Symmachus (Ps. xxxviii. 6), though not in classical Greek. The verb *βίωω* occurs in 1 Pet. iv. 2, and not unfrequently in the LXX. From my youth up, which was from the beginning among my own nation, etc., having knowledge of me from the first (in ver. 5). No appeal could be stronger as to the notoriety of his whole life spent in the midst of his own people, observed and known of all. The T.R. implies that his youth was spent at Jerusalem, according to what he himself tells us in ch. xxii. 3. The R.T. does so less distinctly. (For St. Paul's account of his early Pharisaism, comp. Gal. i. 13, 14; Phil. iii. 5, 6.)

**Ver. 5.—Having knowledge of me from the first for which knew me from the beginning, A.V.; be willing to for would, A.V.; how that for that, A.V.; straitest for most straitest, A.V.** Straitest (*ἀκριβεστάτην*); see ch. xxii. 8; xviii. 26, etc. Sect (*αἵρεσις*); see ch. xxiv. 14, note. He does not disclaim being still a Pharisee. On the contrary, in the next verse (ver. 6) he declares, as he had done in ch. xxiii. 6, that it was for the chief hope of the Pharisees that he was now accused. He tries to enlist all the good feeling that yet remained among the Jews on his side.

**Ver. 6.—Here to be judged for and am judged, A.V.** To be judged (*ἐστηκα κρινόμενος*); rather, *I stand on my trial*. The A.V. seems to give the sense well. The hope of the promise. The hope of the kingdom of Christ, which necessarily implies the resurrection of the dead. This hope, which rested upon God's promise to the fathers, Paul clung to; this hope his Sadducean persecutors denied. He, then, was the true Jew; he was faithful to Moses and the prophets; he claimed the sympathy and support of all true Israelites, and specially of King Agrippa.

**Ver. 7.—Earnestly for instantly, A.V.;**



night and day for day and night, A.V.; attain for come, A.V.; and concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O King! for for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews, A.V. and T.R. Our twelve tribes. Δωδεκάφυλον only occurs here, in the Sibylline oracles, and in the prot-evangel. Jacob., 3, and in Clement's 1 Cor. 55, but is formed, after the analogy of such words as δωδεκαετής, δωδεκάμοιρος, δωδεκάμυθος, τετράφυλος, δεκάφυλος (Herod., v. 66), and the like. The idea of the twelve tribes of Israel is part of the essential conception of the Israel of God. So our Lord (Matt. xix. 28; Jas. i. 1; Rev. vii. 4, etc.). St. Paul felt and spoke like a thorough Israelite. Earnestly; ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ, only here and in 2 Mac. xiv. 38 (where Razis is said to have risked his body and his life for the religion of the Jews, μετὰ πάσης ἐκτενείας, "with all vehemence," A.V.), and Jud. iv. 9, where the phrase, ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ μεγάλῃ, "with great vehemency," "with great fervency," A.V., occurs twice, applied to prayer and to self-humiliation. The adjective ἐκτενής occurs in ch. xii. 5; Luke xxii. 44; 1 Pet. iv. 8; and ἐκτενῶς in 1 Pet. i. 22. Serving (λατρεῖον); i.e. serving with worship, prayers, sacrifices, and the like. The allusion is to the temple service, with its worship by night and by day (comp. Ps. cxxxiv. 1; 1 Chron. ix. 33).

Ver. 8.—Why is it judged incredible with you, if for why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that, A.V.; doth for should, A.V. Why is it judged, etc.? The use of εἰ is somewhat peculiar. It cannot stand for ὅτι, but it is nearly equivalent to "whether," as in ver. 23. The question proposed to the mind is here whether God has raised the dead; and in ver. 23 whether Christ has suffered, whether he is the first to rise. In the latter case St. Paul gives the answer by his witness to the truth, affirming that it is so. In the former case he chides his hearers for giving the answer of unbelief, and saying that it is not so.

Ver. 9.—I verily. He gently excuses their unbelief by confessing that he himself had once felt like them, and insinuates the hope that they would change their minds as he had, and proceeds to give them good reason for doing so. Contrary to the Name (Gal. i. 13; 1 Tim. i. 13). Jesus of Nazareth. By so designating the Lord of glory, he avows himself a member of "the sect of the Nazarenes" (see ch. ii. 22; iii. 6; iv. 10; x. 38, etc.).

Ver. 10.—And this for which thing, A.V.; I both shut up for did I shut up, A.V. (with a change of order); prisons for prison, A.V.; vote for voice, A.V. I . . . shut up. The ἐγώ is emphatic. The verb καταλείω, peculiar to St. Luke (see Luke iii. 20) is much used by medical writers. Were put to death; ἀνα-

ρουμενον, a word frequent in St. Luke's writings, and much used in medical works, as well as ἀναλρεσις (ch. viii. 1). The phrase καταφέρειν ψῆφον is unusual; φέρειν ψῆφον is the more common phrase, both in Josephus and in classical writers. I gave my vote, etc. Not, as Meyer and others take it, "I assented to it, at the moment of their being killed," equivalent to συνευδοκῶν of ch. xxii. 20; but rather, "when the Christians were being punished with death, I was one of those who in the Sanhedrim voted for their death."

Ver. 11.—Punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blasphemers for I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, A.V.; foreign for strange, A.V. In all the synagogues. Those in Jerusalem, as the contrast of the foreign cities shows. (For the facts, see ch. viii. 1, 3.) I strove, etc. The "compelled" of the A.V. is the natural rendering of ἡνάγκαζον (Matt. xiv. 22; Luke xiv. 23; ch. xxviii. 19, etc.); but it does not necessarily follow that the compulsion was successful. It might be in some cases, and not in others. Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, says that those who were accused of being Christians cleared themselves by calling upon the gods, offering to the image of the emperor, and cursing Christ, none of which things, it is said, true Christians ("qui sunt vera Christiani") can be compelled to do ('Epist.' 10, 95, quoted by Kuinoel). Mad against them; ἐμμανόμενος αὐτοῖς, only here; but the adjective ἐμμανής, frantic, is not uncommon in classical writers.

Ver. 12.—Journeyed for went, A.V.; with the authority . . . of for with authority . . . from, A.V. and T.R. Commission; ἐπίτροπῆς, here only in the New Testament. But ἐπίτροπος is a "steward" (Matt. xx. 8; Luke viii. 3); and hence the Roman procurator was called in Greek, ἐπίτροπος, and so were governors generally, as those who acted with a delegated authority. The chief priests. In ch. ix. 1 Saul is said to have applied to "the chief priest" for authority. The high priest, as president of the Sanhedrim, acted with the other chief priests (ch. ix. 14).

Ver. 13.—On for in, A.V.; that for which, A.V. At midday. "About noon" (ch. xxii. 6). It enhanced the wonder of that light from heaven that it should be seen above the brightness of the sun at midday, in such a latitude.

Ver. 14.—Saying unto me in the Hebrew language for speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, A.V. and T.R.; good for pricks, A.V. I heard a voice saying, etc. (see ch. ix. 7, note). In the Hebrew language. This is an additional detail not mentioned in ch. ix. 4 or ch. xxii. 8; but

recalled here, as tending to confirm St. Paul's claim to be a thorough Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and, moreover, to represent Christianity as a thing not alien from, but rather in thorough harmony with, the true national life and spirit of Israel. It is hard for thee to kick, etc. This, also, according to the best manuscripts, is an additional detail not mentioned before. The proverb *πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν*, to kick against the ox-goads, as the unbroken bullock does to his own hurt, instead of quietly submitting, as he must do at last, to go the way and the pace his master chooses he should go, is found in Pindar, Æschylus, Euripides, Plautus, Terence, etc. The passages are given in Bochart, 'Hierozoicon,' part i. lib. ii. ch. xxxix.; in Kuinoel, and in Bishop Wordsworth. The passage in Eurip., 'Bacch.,' l. 793, 794 (750, 751), brings out the force of the proverb, viz. fruitless resistance to a superior power, most distinctly: "Better to sacrifice to him, than, being mortal, by vainly raging against God, to kick against the goads." Saul had better yield at once to the constraining grace of God, and no longer do despite to the Spirit of grace. It does not appear clearly that the proverb was used by the Hebrews. Dr. Donaldson ('Christian Orthodoxy,' p. 293) affirms that "there is no Jewish use of this proverbial expression." And this is borne out by Lightfoot, who adduces the two passages, Deut. xxxii. 15 and 1 Sam. ii. 9, as the only evidences of the existence of such a proverb, together with a rabbinical saying, "R. Bibai sat and taught, and R. Isaac Ben Cahna kicked against him" ('Exercit. on Acts,' ix. 5). It is, therefore, a curious question how this classical phrase came to be used here. Bishop Wordsworth says, "Even in heaven our Lord did not disdain to use a proverb familiar to the heathen world." But, perhaps, we may assume that such a proverb was substantially in use among the Jews, though no distinct evidence of it has been preserved; and that St. Paul, in rendering the Hebrew words of Jesus into Greek, made use of the language of Euripides, with which he was familiar, in a case bearing a strong analogy to his own, viz. the resistance of Pentheus to the claims of Bacchus. This is to a certain extent borne out by the use of the words *θεομαχος* and *θεομαχεῖν* (ch. v. 39; xxiii. 9); the latter of which is twice used in the 'Bacchæ' of Euripides, though not common elsewhere. It is, however, found in 2 Macc. vii. 19.

Ver. 15.—*The Lord for he, A.V. and T.R.*

Ver. 16.—*Arise for rise, A.V.; to this end have I, etc., for I have, etc., for this purpose, A.V.; appoint for make, A.V.; the things wherein thou hast seen me for these things*

*which thou hast seen, A.V. and T.R.; the things wherein for those things in the which, A.V.* For to this end have I appeared, etc. On comparing this statement with those in ch. ix. 6 and ch. xxii. 10, 14, 15, it appears that in this condensed account given before King Agrippa, St. Paul blends into one message the words spoken to him when the Lord first appeared to him, and the instruction subsequently given to him through Ananias, and the words spoken to him in the trance (ch. xxii. 17—21). This may especially be inferred from ch. ix. 6, and again from comparing ch. xxii. 15 with this verse.

Ver. 17.—*Unto whom for unto whom now, A.V.* Unto [the Gentiles]. These seem to be the words heard in the trance reported in ch. xxii. 21, the sequel to which, as contained in ver. 18, the apostle would then have recited, had he not been cut short by the furious cries of the Jews.

Ver. 18.—*That they may turn for and to turn them, A.V. and T.R.; remission for forgiveness, A.V.; an inheritance for inheritance, A.V.; that for which, A.V.; faith in me for faith that is in me, A.V.* To open their eyes (comp. Luke iv. 18 and the LXX. of Isa. lxi. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 4—6, etc.). That they may turn from darkness to light (comp. Col. i. 12, 13; Eph. v. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 9, etc.). Remission of sins (see ch. ii. 38; iii. 19; x. 43).

Ver. 19.—*Wherefore for whereupon, A.V.* Disobedient (*ἀπειθεῖς*); see Luke i. 17; Rom. i. 30, etc. The turn of the phrase is most skilful; as if he should say, "Can you blame me for obeying such a heavenly message? How could I act otherwise, being thus directed?" Vision (*ὄρασις*); Luke i. 22; xxiv. 23; 2 Cor. xii. 1. Found also repeatedly in the LXX. of Daniel and Wisdom (comp. the use of *ὁράνω*, ch. i. 3).

Ver. 20.—*Declared for showed, A.V.; both to them of Damascus first for first unto them of Damascus, A.V. and T.R.; country for coasts, A.V.; also for then, A.V.; doing for and do, A.V.; worthy of for meet for, A.V.* Them of Damascus first, etc. He enumerates his evangelical labours in the order in which they took place: at Damascus first, as related in ch. ix. 19—22; then at Jerusalem, as in ch. ix. 26—29; and then those on a larger and wider scale, among the Jews of Palestine and the heathen in all the countries which he visited. Throughout all the country of Judæa. This does not allude to any preaching in the land of Judæa at the time of his first visit to Jerusalem (ch. ix. 28), because he says in Gal. i. 22, that at that time, viz. before he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, he was still "unknown by face unto the Churches of Judæa." But he had opportunities later of

preaching in Judæa. For instance, the language of ch. xi. 29 suggests that such an opportunity may have arisen when Paul and Barnabas carried up the alms of the Christians at Antioch "unto the brethren that dwell in Judæa." Another opportunity he manifestly had when he passed with Barnabas through Phœnicia and Samaria to Jerusalem, as related in ch. xv. 3. Another, when he went from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, as related in ch. xviii. 22. Again, there was room for working among the Jews in Palestine while he was staying at Cæsarea "many days," and journeying to Jerusalem, as we read in ch. xxi. 10, 15. So that there is no contradiction whatever between the statement in this verse and that in Gal. i. 22. The clauses in this verse are two: (1) "both to them at Damascus, and at Jerusalem first;" and (2) "and throughout all Judæa, and to the Gentiles."

Ver. 21.—*This cause for these causes, A.V.; seized for caught, A.V.; essayed for went about, A.V.* For this cause. Here again is a most telling statement. "I have spent my life in trying to persuade men to repent and turn to God, and for doing so the Jews seek to kill me. Can this be right? Will not you, O King Agrippa, protect me from such an unjust requital?" To kill me; διαχειρισθαι, here and in ch. v. 30 only in the New Testament; not in the LXX., but in Polybius, and in Hippocrates and Galen, of surgical operations.

Ver. 22.—*The help that is from God for help of God, A.V.; stand for continue, A.V.; testifying for witnessing, A.V.; nothing but what for none other things than those which, A.V.* Help, etc.; ἐνικουρία, here only and in Wisd. xiii. 18, still of Divine help; in medical writers frequently, of aid from medicine and physicians; common also in classical writers, of auxiliary forces. It is properly spoken of help and allies from without (Bengel). I stand; i.e. I continue unmoved, steadfast, and, by God's help, not crushed by my enemies. Testifying. The natural rendering of the R.T. μαρτυρούμενος. The T.R. μαρτυρούμενος, followed by ὑπό, would mean "borne witness to," "approved," as in ch. vi. 3; x. 22, etc., and so Meyer understands it here. But μαρτυρούμενος makes much better sense, and is much better supported by manuscript authority. It is in close agreement with ch. ix. 15 and ch. xxii. 15, that St. Paul should thus "testify" to small and great.

Ver. 23.—*How that the Christ must for that Christ should, A.V.; how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim for that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show, A.V.; both to for unto, A.V. and T.R.* How that (ei); see ver. 8, note. Must suffer; παθὴνός only

here and in profane Greek writers. The exact meaning of παθὴνός is "liable to suffering," just as θνητός (from θνήσκω) means "liable to death," i.e. mortal. But just as θνητός in use comes to mean "one who must die," so παθὴνός means "one who must suffer;" and so we read in Luke xxiv. 26, Οὐχὶ ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν, καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ; "Ought not Christ to have suffered," etc.? And so again in Luke xxiv. 46 (T.R.), ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν, καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν, "It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead," where the turn of thought is exactly the same as here. The Vulgate renders it by *passibilis*. The Fathers (Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr) contrast the state of Christ in glory with his state in the flesh by the words ἀπαθής and παθὴνός, "impassible" and "passible." That he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim, etc. Most commentators, from Chrysostom downwards, connect the first with the resurrection. "First from the resurrection," equal to πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν (Col. i. 18). As Meyer truly says, "The chief stress of this sentence lies on πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως." The A.V. gives the sense by a periphrasis; only it must be well understood that it was especially by being the first to rise, and so to bring life and immortality to light, that Christ showed light to the people. The words *mad*, of course, be construed as the R.V. does, but such a rendering is not in accordance with the spirit of the passage or the analogy of other passages. Christ was the first to rise, and he will be followed by them that are his. But it is not true to say that he was the first to give light to Jews and Gentiles, and will be followed by others doing the same. (For the sentiment, comp. Luke ii. 32.) Note on the whole the enormous stress laid by St. Paul on the fulfilment of prophecy as a proof of the truth of the gospel, following therein our Lord himself (Luke xxiv. 25, 27, 44, 45).

Ver. 24.—*Made his defence for spake for himself, A.V. (ἀπολογουμένου, as ver. 2); saith for said, A.V.; mad for beside thyself, A.V.; thy much for much, A.V.; turn thee to madness for make thee mad, A.V.* With a loud voice. Another detail, betraying the eye-witness of the scene described. Thou art mad (μᾶλιν); ch. xii. 15; John x. 20; 1 Cor. xiv. 23. Much learning (τὰ πολλὰ γράμματα). So John vii. 15, "How knowest this man letters (γράμματα)?" is equivalent to "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" (Matt. xiii. 54). And ἀγράμματος in ch. iv. 13 is "unlearned." The excited interruption by Festus shows that he was unable to accept the truths enunciated by the apostle. The ideas of fulfilled prophecy, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of a



crucified Jew giving light to the great Roman world, were "foolishness unto him," because he lacked spiritual discernment. He thought the apostle's glowing words must be the outcome of a disordered mind. Turn thee to madness (*eis manían peritrépei*). The word *μανία* (*mania*) occurs only here in the New Testament. But it is the technical name in medical writers for the disease of *μανία*, *mania*, and is also common in classical writers. The verb for "doth turn" (*περιτρέπει*) is also peculiar to St. Luke, being found only in this place. It is used by Plato, but specially by medical writers, as is also the substantive formed from it, *περιτροπή*, spoken of the "turn" taken by a disease, and the simple verb *τρέπει* and *τρέπεται*: e.g. *ἐτρεψε γνώμην ἐς μανίην: ἐς σκυθρωπὸν ἢ μανίην τρέπεται: τοῖς μαινομένοισι ἄλλοτε μὲν ἐς ὀργήν, ἄλλοτε δὲ ἐς θυμολίαν* (mirth) *ἡγνώμη τρέπεται*, etc. (Hobart, p. 468).

Ver. 25.—*Paul saith for he said*, A.V. and T.R.; excellent for noble, A.V.; *words for the words*, A.V. Most excellent (*κράτιστε*). It appears to be the proper title to give the procurator (see ch. xxiii. 26; xxiv. 3). St. Luke also applies it to Theophilus (Luke i. 3). In classical Greek *οἱ κράτιστοι* are the aristocracy. Soberness (*σωφροσύνη*); *sound or sober mindedness*; just the opposite of the *μανία* of which he was accused. See the use of *σωφρονεῖν* (Mark v. 15; Luke viii. 35; 2 Cor. v. 13, etc.), and of *σωφρονίζεω*, *σωφρονισμός*, *σωφρων*, etc. So also in Plato, *σωφροσύνη* is opposed to *μανία*.

Ver. 26.—*Unto for before*, A.V.; *is hidden for are hidden*, A.V.; *this hath not been for this thing was not*, A.V. For the king, etc. Something in Agrippa's manner showed St. Paul that he was not unaffected by what he had heard. And so with his usual quickness and tact he appeals to him to confirm the "words of truth and soberness" which he had just addressed to the sceptical Festus. I speak freely. He was indeed a prisoner and in chains, as he so touchingly said (in ver. 29), but the word of God in his mouth was not bound. *παρρησιαζόμενος* (see ch. ix. 27; xiii. 46; xiv. 3; xviii. 26; xix. 8; and the frequent use of *παρρησία*).

Ver. 28.—*And for then*, A.V.; *with but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian for almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*, A.V. With but little persuasion (*ἐν ὀλίγῳ*, κ.τ.λ.). This saying of Agrippa's is obscure and variously explained. The A.V., following Chrysostom, Beza, Luther, etc., takes *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* to mean "within a little" or "almost," like the Hebrew *עַל־כֵּף*, which is very suitable to the context. The corresponding *ἐν πολλῷ*, or, as otherwise read, *ἐν μεγάλῳ*, would then mean, as in the A.V., "altogether," and the sense of the whole passage is striking and appropriate. But

there is some difficulty in getting this meaning out of the words. The natural way of expressing it would be *παρ' ὀλίγον*, or *ὀλίγου*, or *ὀλίγον δεῖ*. Hence many other commentators take *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* to mean "in a short time," and the sense to be either "you are making short work of my conversion: you are persuading me to become a Christian as suddenly as you yourself did;" with a corresponding sense for *ἐν πολλῷ*, "in a long time," i.e. whether it takes a short or a long time, I pray God you may become a Christian like myself; or, "you are soon persuading me," you will soon persuade me if you go on any longer in this strain. Others, again, preferring the reading *ἐν μεγάλῳ* in ver. 23, take *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* to mean "with little trouble," or "with few words," as Eph. iii. 5 (understanding *λόγῳ* or *πόνῳ*), "lightly" (Alford), and then the opposite *ἐν μεγάλῳ* would mean "with much trouble," "with many words," i.e. "with difficulty." But this is rather a flat rendering. Another difference of opinion is whether the words of Agrippa are to be taken ironically, or sarcastically, or jestingly, or whether they are to be taken seriously, as the words of a man shaken in his convictions and seriously impressed by what he had heard. The whole turn of the narrative seems to favour the latter view. Another view, started by Chrysostom, is that Agrippa used the words in one sense, and St. Paul (mistakenly or advisedly) took them in another. Another possible explanation is that *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* is here used in the sense in which Thucydides employs the phrase (ii. 86 and iv. 26), *τὴν ἐν ὀλίγῳ ναυμάχῳ* and *Ἐν ὀλίγῳ στρατοπεδευόμενος*, viz. "in a narrow place;" and that Agrippa meant to say, "By your appeal to the prophets you press me hard; you have got me into a corner. I am in a *στενοχωρία*, a 'narrow room;' I hardly know how to get out of it." The *ἐν μεγάλῳ* would then mean a "large room," a *εὐρυχωρία* (Pa. xxx. 8). This would suppose *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* and *ἐν μεγάλῳ* to have become proverbial phrases.

Ver. 29.—*Whether with little or with much for both almost, and altogether*, A.V.; *might become for were*, A.V. (the order of the words is also changed). I would to God; literally, *I would pray to God*. It is not very different from the *ἐυχόμεν* of Rom. ix. 3. All acknowledge the extreme beauty and taste of this reply, combining the firmness of the martyr with the courtesy of the gentleman. "Loquitur Paulus ex sensu suae beatitudinis, cum amore latissimo" (Bengel).

Ver. 30.—*And the king rose up for and when he had thus spoken, the king, etc.*, A.V. and T.R. They that sat with them. The chief captains and principal men and the royal attendants of ch. xxv. 23.

Ver. 31.—*Had withdrawn for were gone aside*, A.V.; *spoke one to another for talked*

*between themselves, A.V.* Had withdrawn; viz. from the public hall, the ἀποαρχήριον of ch. xxv. 23, into the private room, "the withdrawing-room" adjoining it. There they freely talked over the trial, and all agreed that the prisoner had done nothing to deserve either death or imprisonment. Paul had made a favourable impression upon both Jews and Romans.

Ver. 32.—*And Agrippa said for then said Agrippa, A.V.* Agrippa said unto Festus. Festus had consulted Agrippa, as one conversant with Jewish questions, about the

case of Paul (ch. xxv. 14—21). And in the place of hearing he had publicly stated that he had brought him before King Agrippa to be examined, that, "after examination had," he might know what to write to the emperor. Accordingly Agrippa now gives it as his opinion that the prisoner might have been discharged if he had not appealed to Cæsar. Festus was of the same opinion, and doubtless wrote to Nero to that effect. The result was that he was acquitted before the emperor's tribunal at Rome, at the end of two years.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—26.—*The apology.* We are struck with a contrast between the conduct of our Lord when he stood before the bar of Caiaphas and of Pontius Pilate, and that of St. Paul when he was brought before Festus and Agrippa. It is written of Jesus, when the Jews accused him before Caiaphas, that "he held his peace." And again, as he stood before Pontius Pilate the governor, when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, that he answered nothing. And even when Pilate himself appealed to him, he gave him no answer, not even to one word; but, like a lamb dumb before the shearer, opened not his mouth. St. Paul, on the contrary, when his enemies launched vehement accusations against him, stood boldly on his defence. With infinite wisdom, eloquence, and spirit, he rebutted their charges, and asserted his innocence of them. Both before the Sanhedrim and before Felix, as well as before Festus and Agrippa, he maintained his own cause with consummate skill and dignity; not cowed by their violence, nor losing his temper in meeting their attack; but confronting them with the boldness of a pure conscience, and with the energy of an invincible courage. Can we assign any reason for this remarkable difference between the conduct of the Master and the servant under such similar circumstances? It is, of course, possible that the patience and silence of Jesus was the result of that conscious innocence and perfect sinlessness which belonged to the Son of man alone, and could not be shared by even the holiest of his servants. As he would not allow his servants to draw the sword in his defence, so neither would he speak a word to vindicate his innocence and uphold his cause. It may have been part of his Divine mission of suffering to be absolutely passive in receiving injuries by word, as he was in enduring the shame and agony of the cross. Unresisted slander, unresented blasphemies, undenied accusations, may have been as truly parts of the Passion, as the spitting, and the smiting on the cheek, and the crown of thorns, and the piercing of the hands and feet were. His answer, his apology, his acquittal, were to be the resurrection from the dead; and, awaiting that apology at the hands of his Father, silent endurance was to be his part. The difference between his sinlessness as the Son and the inferior goodness of the apostle mixed with sin, and between the vindication of the Son to be proclaimed by the resurrection and the vindication of the apostle to be effected by ordinary means, may be one ground of the difference which we are considering. But there is another obvious difference between the two cases. Christ must suffer. According to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Jesus was to lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin. And he was willing to do so. His own will was one with the Father's will, that thus it should be. As, therefore, he would not pray to his Father to send him twelve legions of angels, to free him from his enemies, so neither would he resist his condemnation by assertions or proofs of his sinless purity. He was silent before his unjust judges, as he bore his cross, as he stretched out his hands upon it, as finally he bowed the head and gave up the ghost. It was otherwise with St. Paul. He had no life to give for the world's sins, nor was he yet to die at all. He had more years to run in his Lord's service, nor did he know when his time would come. He must live and work awhile for the souls of Jews and Gentiles, and must leave no stone unturned to exhibit his integrity before mankind. Apart from the natural feelings of the man, it was his duty to repel those

charges which would hinder him in his work. Hence his noble apology. A free confession of his errors and his faults; a lofty assertion of the integrity of his course; a lucid narrative of his wondrous life; a bold confession of the change in his soul; a holy boast of his faith in Jesus and the works which were its fruit; a pregnant proclamation of Christ's gospel in the ears of his accusers and judges; and a fervent appeal to Festus and Agrippa, such as an archangel might address to the sons of men from the heights of heaven, so grand is its superiority;—these make up that apology which has a moving eloquence in it as fresh to-day as eighteen hundred years ago; an apology which gives us a portraiture of the apologist well calculated to rivet our affection to him, and to command our admiration of a character to which, in the whole range of secular and sacred history, we can scarcely find *quidquam simile aut secundum*, worthy to be placed by its side as a rival in Christian heroism.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 8.—The credibility of the resurrection.** If it be an incredible doctrine, it must be so because to raise men from the dead is physically impossible or morally unlikely in a very high degree. But—

**I. IT IS NOT PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE.** 1. The continuance of the spirit in existence after death is certainly not impossible; indeed, it is the *discontinuance* which has seemed so impossible that to many thinkers its permanency appears to be a necessity. The difficulty, to many minds, is to understand how a spirit can be dissolved and destroyed. 2. Its reassociation with a human body of some kind is also possible, and to almighty power and wisdom easy of execution. The same Divine strength and skill which created and fashioned man as he is can surely continue his existence and his powers under similar conditions to the present ones. He who has made us what we are *can* make us again, more or less closely associated with the bodily frame which is our present home and organ.

**II. TO RAISE HIS OWN SON FROM THE DEAD IN ORDER TO ASSURE THE WORLD OF HIS DIVINITY**, and of the heavenly origin of the faith he taught, is credible enough. Granted that Jesus Christ *was* the Son of God and Saviour of the world, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so far from being incredible or even improbable, is positively demanded.

**III. TO RAISE FROM THE DEAD THE FOLLOWERS OF A RISEN AND ASCENDED SAVIOUR** is perfectly credible. Granted what we have assumed, and that, therefore, Jesus Christ is Saviour, Lord, and Friend of believing, loving, and faithful disciples, it follows that he would exert his Divine power and raise them to his heavenly kingdom, that they might share his honour and his blessedness. The real difficulty is not in the resurrection of Jesus Christ or in that of his disciples; it is in the assumption which lies behind—the assumption that Jesus Christ was one who came down from heaven to redeem a fallen race. That granted, everything else follows necessarily. We maintain that—

**IV. A DIVINE REDEMPTION IS A CREDIBLE AND NOT AN INCREDIBLE IDEA.** There is much within us and around us that points to the presence of a holy and living Father of spirits. If we make our appeal to our own hearts—and there is nothing higher than a living human heart from which to argue to the Divine—we shall conclude that to restore his fallen children by the sacrifice of himself was just that very thing which the infinite Father would do. There is nothing *more* probable, *more* credible than that. 1. Redeeming love is a well-attested fact. 2. The resurrection of Christ is involved in that fact. 3. The resurrection of man is an inference from *that*. (1) Regard it as a certainty. (2) Prepare for it as an event in which we have all the deepest personal interest.—C.

**Vers. 9, 10.—Gradations in guilt.** The old notion that, as sin is committed against an infinite God, it must itself be an infinite evil, and that, therefore, all sins are equally heinous and offensive, is held no longer. Its logic is unsound, and our moral sense contradicts the theory. The fact is that the degrees of human guilt in the multitude of actions men perform, under a vast variety of conditions, are indefinitely numerous. Only the Omniscient can possibly discriminate and compute them. But there are



some simple principles on which we may safely rely for our spiritual guidance. We judge—

I. THAT DELIBERATE AND DIRECT ANTAGONISM TO CHRIST IS THE GUILTIEST OF ALL POSITIONS. "Doing things contrary to . . . Jesus Christ," when these things are done by an agent who knows what he does, reaches the very summit of iniquity. "This is the condemnation, that light is come," etc. When men oppose themselves to Christian truth because "their deeds are evil," because "their craft is in danger," because they hate the light which exposes their sin and robs them of their gains or their enjoyments, then they stand in the very front rank of criminality; they deliberately take up arms against their Maker; "They take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder," etc.; they say, "This is the Son; come, let us kill him," etc. Surely God will trouble these "with his sore displeasure" (Ps. ii. 5).

II. THAT DELIBERATE NEUTRALITY IS A MOST SERIOUS SIN. When men refrain from taking an active part against the cause of Christ and his truth, doing "nothing contrary," etc., they shun the very worst possible thing. But when they attempt to take neutral ground, and either (1) reject the claims which Christ makes on their personal subjection (Matt. ix. 9; xi. 28, 29, etc.), or (2) refuse to render the help they can bring to his cause (Matt. xxi. 30; xxv. 18, etc.), then they fall into great condemnation, and must "bear their iniquity" (see Matt. vii. 26, 27; Luke xiii. 25—28; Judg. v. 23).

III. THAT IGNORANCE CHANGES THE CHARACTER AND MATERIALLY AFFECTS THE DEGREE OF GUILT. Clearly Paul was not so guilty in his acts of persecution as he would have been, had he not "thought that he ought to do many things contrary," etc. He himself tells us that this ignorance of his was a great mitigation of the sinfulness of his act (see 1 Tim. i. 13). Our Lord also gave his own Divine sanction to this truth when suffering the pangs of crucifixion (Luke xxiii. 34). 1. Ignorance changes the character of the sin. What Paul was guilty of in those days was not the deliberate attempt to crush the work of a Divine Redeemer; he would have recoiled from so doing, had the act presented itself thus to his mind. His mistake, his condemnation, was that he had not fairly and impartially considered the claims of Jesus of Nazareth; that he had blindly assumed that his teachers were right, guiltily neglecting all the proofs which the Saviour had given that he was the Messiah "that should come into the world." 2. It also greatly reduces its turpitude. Not to have inquired as we should have done—this is wrong and blameworthy. But it is not so serious an offence, in the sight of God or of man, as wilfully and wantonly to conspire against the Lord, and to seek to positively hinder the coming of his kingdom. It may rightly comfort those who, like Paul, have to look back on offences which they have committed, when they can say, with him, "I verily thought," etc.; when it can be said to them, "Brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it" (ch. iii. 17).

IV. THAT ONLY ABSOLUTE IGNORANCE EXONERATES FROM BLAME. It is conceivable that men may be so circumstanced that their ignorance is absolute, and therefore wholly faultless. In this case there is no guilt. But how seldom is it of this kind! Usually when we do "things contrary" to truth, righteousness, God, we might have known better if we had inquired more promptly or more purely. We may not excuse ourselves if we have kept out of our mind any light we might have admitted. We may apply this to (1) the doctrines we are accepting; (2) the leaders we are encouraging; (3) the business we are conducting; (4) the family we are training.—C.

Vers. 16—18.—*Minister and messenger.* The charge given by the manifested Saviour to the stricken and awakened Saul is one which, in a true sense, though in smaller measure, we can apply to ourselves. We look at—

I. THE TWOFOLD RELATION IN WHICH HE WAS TO STAND. "To make thee a minister and a witness." Paul was to be (1) related to Christ as his servant, and to be (2) related to his fellow-men as their teacher. We are to engage in every Christian work as those who carry with them everywhere a sense of obedience to a Divine Master. We are to do and say nothing which we feel that he does not desire us to do or to say. We are also to feel that, in regard to our fellows, we are as those who have a Divine message to deliver. If we are content to expound our own views, to establish our own position, or to secure

a large following for ourselves, we fall miserably short of our true vocation: we are called to convey Christ's message to mankind.

II. THE TWOFOLD SOURCE WHENCE HE WAS TO DRAW HIS MESSAGE. He was to bear witness "both of these things which he had seen, and of those things in the which Christ would appear unto him" (ver. 16). Not only was he to narrate what he already knew, but he was to convey and enforce the truths which were soon to be revealed to him. We are to draw continually on this double source. We are (1) to repeat the facts and truths with which past experience and study have made us familiar; and also (2) to unfold those later and maturer views which our Lord will be revealing to our open and inquiring minds.

III. THE TWOFOLD PROTECTION OF WHICH HE WAS ASSURED. "Delivering thee from the (Jewish) people, and from the Gentiles" (ver. 17). He was to encounter serious perils and difficulties, but he would escape the one and surmount the other. He would find himself opposed and thwarted by the Jews and the Gentiles, by those who were "nigh" and by those who were "afar off," by the children of privilege from whom he might have hoped to receive help, and by the sons of ignorance from whom he might have expected to endure hostility. By whomsoever assailed, the Divine Saviour would be his defence. We, too, may expect to be opposed by two parties—by those within and by "them that are without," by the heirs of privilege and by the aliens and strangers. If we are faithful and trustful, we may safely cast ourselves on the care of our Divine Friend, who, if he does not save us *from*, will assuredly save us *in*, the disappointments and the sufferings which will threaten us as champions of his cause.

IV. THE TWOFOLD ISSUE OF HIS WORK. 1. *Spiritual illumination*. Those to whom he was to go would turn "from darkness to light," their "eyes having been opened." Having been blind to the existence, or to the nature and character, or to the claims of God; or blind to the worth of the human soul, or to the true end and aim of human life, or to the solemnity of death and judgment; or blind to the excellency of holy service, to the beauty of holiness, to the blessedness of consecration and self-denial; they were to perceive, to understand, to rejoice in the truth, to walk in the light. Their experience in the spiritual realm would answer to his in the material world who should awake from blackest night to brightest day. 2. *Deliverance*. "From the power of Satan unto God" (ver. 18). In ignorance and sin men are the bondmen of the evil one, held in his cords, subject to his sway. Delivered from the power of sin, they become the freedmen of Christ; they walk in "the glorious liberty of the children of God." From a degrading bondage they are rescued, that they may rejoice in a holy, elevating freedom.

V. THE TWOFOLD BLESSING HE WAS TO PROMISE. 1. Forgiveness of sins. 2. Sanctification—"that they may receive," etc. (ver. 18). Immediately on the exercise of faith they were to receive the abounding mercy of God, that "forgiveness" which means not only the not holding them under condemnation, but also the positive reception of them into Divine favour, the admission of them to the Father's table, the reinstatement of them into all the privileges of sonship. And gradually they were to rise into a state of sanctification, leaving old and evil things behind, and reaching forth to that which is before; attaining to the stature of Christian manhood, becoming holy even as God is holy (1 Pet. i. 16).

VI. THE ONE CONDITION ON WHICH HE MUST INSIST. "By faith that is in me." Every blessing promised was and is to be attained by faith in Jesus Christ himself. Not the acceptance of a creed, nor admission to a Church, nor submission to a ceremony, but a living faith in a living Saviour; the cordial acceptance of Jesus Christ himself as the Divine Saviour, the rightful Lord, the all-sufficient Friend of the human heart.—C.

✓ Ver. 19.—"*The heavenly vision:*" a sermon to the young. When Paul was "apprehended of Christ Jesus" on his way to Damascus, he was yet a young man. He was still at the outset of his career; his life was still before him. When that heavenly vision came, and he saw the Lord, he himself and his whole life were absolutely changed. The current which had surged so swiftly in one line then turned and flowed steadily and uninterruptedly in the opposite direction. That vision from God revolutionized, transformed his whole self and all his plans and hopes. What visions have we now, and what influence have they on our hearts and lives? We reply—

**I. THAT TO THE YOUNG THERE COMMONLY OCCURS SOME VISION FROM HEAVEN.** We do not expect the miraculous now. God may, and probably does, make known his will in ways that are outside and above the ordinary and the natural; but we have no right to reckon on these. He does come to us by the illuminating influences of his Holy Spirit, and he thus elevates the mind, awakens the soul, subdues the will, renews the nature, transforms the life. God visits us through various means, acts upon us by many instruments, wins us in different ways. The heavenly vision is sure to come during the days of youth, when the mind is more open and the heart more tender; "for of such is the kingdom of God." 1. It may take the form of a vision of Jesus Christ—his excellency and claims. The young heart may see him, as it had never before, as One who is infinitely worthy of trust, of love, of service, of submission. 2. Or it may take the form of a vision of human life—its seriousness and responsibility. The mind may awake to this great fact: having regarded human life as nothing better than a thing to be enjoyed, or as an opportunity for making money, or gaining a brief reputation, or attaining to some social position, it comes to see, in the light of God's revealing truth, that it may be something immeasurably more and higher—that it may be made a sacred opportunity of spiritual culture, of holy usefulness, and of Divine service. 3. Or it may take the form of a vision of the human soul—its greatness and value. It may suddenly become conscious of the fact that God has created us for himself, that we may possess his likeness, live his life, and share his immortality; that within the humblest human frame resides a spirit whose worth the wealth of a planet will not weigh.

**II. THAT THEN COMES THE TIME FOR THE GREAT DECISION.** There are other occasions in the course of human life when a decisive choice is made; when it is resolved what vocation shall be pursued, what life-companion taken, what country adopted for a home, etc.; but there is no occasion which compares with this in sacred interest, in lasting issues. It may be even said that "on this winged hour eternity is hung." Obedience or disobedience to the heavenly vision makes all the difference between success and failure, between peace and unrest of soul, between life and death. Obedience means (1) becoming right with God; (2) spending a life in accordance with his will and in harmony with our true and deeper cravings; (3) a title to everlasting joy in the future. Disobedience means the sad and dark opposites of these: (1) remaining under God's displeasure; (2) living a life at variance with his purpose and the true end of man; (3) rejecting the offer of eternal life.—C.

**Vers. 20—23.—The penalty and the resources of a devoted life.** There is no trace of egotism, in the offensive sense of the word, in this simple sketch of the apostle's course. He is simply telling the truth concerning himself out of a pure heart. But in so doing he gives us the picture of—

**I. A DEVOTED LIFE.** 1. He began at the earliest possible time to carry out the Master's will—"showed first unto them of Damascus" (ver. 20). 2. He laboured in the most difficult and dangerous sphere—"and at Jerusalem." 3. He went wherever the guiding finger pointed—"throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles." 4. He was not afraid of those who were high nor disregarding of those who were low—"witnessing both to small and great" (ver. 22). 5. He preached everywhere unpalatable but indispensable truth—"that they should repent . . . and do works meet for repentance" (ver. 20). 6. He was undeterred by any obstacles from continuing in his career—"I continue unto this day" (ver. 22). We are not all charged by our Master to do the kind of work for which Paul was his "chosen vessel;" but we are all called upon to devote our powers to his holy service, our lives to his praise and glory; and it behoves us, as it became him, to begin early, to accept whatever duty the Lord may lay upon us, to shrink from no service because it seems uninviting or perilous, to be thorough in all we do for him, and to persist through good and evil report even to the end, until he shall take the weapon from our hand.

**II. THE PENALTY OF DEVOTEDNESS.** "For these causes the Jews caught me," etc. (ver. 21). Paul's faithful and fearless devotedness to the will and the cause of Jesus Christ led him into the utmost danger, and caused him the severest losses and trials. The less of consecration the less of persecution; the more of the one the more of the other. So, in some degree, now. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus



shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). All are not expected to face the same trials. The apostle had his own difficulties to surmount and dangers to front. The missionary has his; the minister has his; the reformer has his. The Christian man in every-day life has his own penalties of devotedness to pay. Enthusiastic zeal, perfect purity, unswerving truthfulness, incorruptible fidelity,—these qualities, and such as these, cannot be continually manifested without calling out and calling down the hostility, condemnation, and opposition of the world. If we take not up the cross thus and follow Christ, we are "not worthy of him."

III. TWO SOURCES OF STRENGTH. 1. The help to be had of God: "having obtained help of God" (ver. 22). Christ appeared to him at Jerusalem, at Troas, at Corinth, and sustained him by special visitations. All along his path he had the upholding hand of the Almighty about him. 2. Consciousness of integrity. There was no ground for this hatred of him, this relentless persecution. He was not really the renegade his enemies took him for. His conduct could be fully justified by their own authorities; he had been saying "none other things than these," etc. (vers. 22, 23). He had a conscience void of offence toward man as well as toward God; he was as guiltless before his own countrymen as he was before Cæsar. Here we have two sources of strength under those persecutions which are the inevitable outcome of our fidelity. *Divine sustenance*—the guidance of the heavenly Father, the watchful care of the Divine Saviour, the comfort of the Holy Ghost. *Consciousness of rectitude*—the feeling that we are saying and doing "none other things" than the Word of God will justify, and than those who abuse and injure us would themselves approve if they would only judge us with open and impartial mind.—C.

Vers. 24—28.—*The Christian's desire.* The point of deepest interest in this scene is Paul's reply to Agrippa. There the nobility of the apostle is conspicuously present. But it is worth while to glance, first, at—

I. THE BLINDNESS OF SIN. (Ver. 24.) It makes mistakes of the greatest magnitude; it looks at the wisdom of God and mistakes it for madness. So it judged incarnate wisdom (John x. 30). So we are to expect it will judge us; for "the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man" (1 Cor. ii. 14), whether he be Greek (1 Cor. i. 23) or Roman (text). That the whole Gentile world should be redeemed from sin and led by repentance into the kingdom of God by means of a suffering Saviour—this, which is the wisdom of God, deep and Divine, seemed to the proud man of the world nothing better than insanity itself. Enlightened by his Spirit, we detect in this the very essence of Divine wisdom. If the eternal Father, looking down upon us, sees his own wise procedure mistaken for and spoken of as madness, may we not be content that our human schemes and plans should sometimes receive the faint approval, or even the direct condemnation, of our fellows?

II. THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE UNDER ATTACK. Paul was not abashed by the sudden outbreak of Festus, nor did he give way to unsuitable and injudicious resentment. He replied with calmness and dignity to the insulting charge of his Roman judge (ver. 25). When assailed in this way—when charged with folly, error, fanaticism, or even madness—the best thing we can do is to bear ourselves calmly, retaining mental and moral equability. This is the best way to disprove the allegations that are made. (1) First let us be well assured of our position, not taking our ground until we have made all necessary inquiries and have every possible guarantee that we are on the side of "truth and soberness;" and then (2) let us refuse to be disconcerted by abuse, oppose quiet dignity to angry crimination, and show a conscious rectitude which is far superior to violence, whether of word or deed.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S DESIRE FOR ALL WHOM HE CAN REACH. Paul turned appealingly from Festus to Agrippa. Some points in common there must be, he felt, between himself and his royal countryman (vers. 26, 27). The king put off the prisoner with a courtly sarcasm (ver. 28); but the apostle was not thus to be silenced. In noble language and with touching allusion to the fetters he wore, he expressed the earnest wish that, whether with ease or with difficulty, not only the king himself, but all who heard him, might be "such as he was." A pure and passionate desire filled his soul that all whom he could anyway affect might be elevated and blessed by that ennobling truth which the risen Saviour had revealed to him. This holy earnestness of his may remind

us: 1. That the truth of the gospel is that which can be indefinitely extended without making any man the poorer. If a man divides his gold among the poor, he loses it himself, but he who imparts heavenly wisdom, Christian influence, gains as he gives. 2. That it is the tendency of Christian truth to make its possessor desire to extend it. The contemplation of a God of love, the study of the life and spirit of the self-sacrificing Saviour, the purity of the joy which it inspires in the human heart,—these are fitted to produce in the soul a holy yearning to extend to others the blessedness we enjoy. 3. That it becomes us to put forth all our talents to diffuse the knowledge and to spread the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The thought of millions of souls starving that might feed on the bread of life should animate us with keen desire and send us with elastic step in the path of deliverance and of life.—C.

Vers. 1—32.—*Paul before Festus and Agrippa.* His address may be divided as follows:—

I. THE REMARKABLE STORY OF HIS LIFE. (Vers. 1—18.) 1. *His life in Judaism.* He had been brought up, as all knew, in the strictest sect of his religion, a Pharisee. Paul's example, it has been remarked, lends no countenance to the fallacy that dissolute students make the best preachers. He had been conscientious from the first, a friend of virtue, and a servant of the Law. He had not sacrificed his youth to vice, nor wooed with unabashed front the means of weakness and debility, physical or moral. "One cannot believe that men of this kind are so quickly converted. Ordination does not change the heart, nor is the surplice or gown a means of grace." 2. *The charge against him.* Notwithstanding that an evil leaven of passion or zeal had worked in him in those unconverted days (and he does not conceal it), he had retained the Pharisaic hope of the resurrection of the dead. The zeal of the Jews, on the other hand, against the gospel, tended to cut them off from living connection with the religion of their fathers, and from the blessings of the better covenant which superseded the old. And this zeal of unbelief was blind. What was there incredible in the idea of the resurrection of the dead? The question may be generalized to the unbeliever—What is there at bottom so incredible in any of the great objects of Christian faith? The form of the belief may change, the substance remains from age to age. 3. *His own resistance to conviction.* He can speak feelingly to these sceptics, for he has known the most stubborn doubt and resistance himself. He had been under an illusion. He had thought it a duty to oppose Jesus. There is a deep and pure joy in confession, and in the knowledge that one's own sincere experience will be profitable as guide and warning to others. He is ever ready to speak on this matter; it is one of his noblest traits (ch. xxii.; 1 Tim. i. 16). The blessed change he can never forget; he is a living wonder to himself and to many. Let preachers derive their best material from the experience of their heart and life. 4. *His conversion.* (Vers. 13—18.) The splendour of that light from heaven shining on his path of blind fury can never be forgotten. And the first beam which breaks through the night of our sin and stubbornness is worthy of eternal recollection and meditation (2 Cor. iv. 6). The glory of the once humiliated but now enthroned Saviour surpasses all. With the light comes the voice, which humiliates and raises, rebukes and cheers. The voice echoes the secret voice of his conscience, hitherto, in the intoxication of his passion, half heard or not heard at all. But it is also a voice which is loftier than that of the self-condemning conscience—Divine, pardoning, and cheering. "Stand up!" God slays and makes alive. The like voice was heard upon the holy mount (Matt. xvii. 7). From that moment Saul rose up a new creature in Christ Jesus. And it is the revelation of the love of God, a thought mightier than all our own doubt, a force in the soul irresistible against our passion and hate, which must conquer us and in our lowliness make us for the first time truly great. 5. *His ordination.* It may be viewed as an example of true ordination to the sacred calling. (1) It is a Divine act. The prayers and the laying on of hands will not suffice to turn the worldling into the spiritual man. There must be the inner sanctification and anointing. "Power from on high" must be received, by which a man may stand and witness and serve. (2) It appoints to service, and only to honour through service. Neither dignified titles nor riches are promised to Paul, but toil and suffering even unto death. The best orders a man can have are to be found in his ability to teach and in the evidence of fruit from his teaching. (3) Paul was to be

a witness, not only of that which he had already seen, but of that which was yet to be shown to him. And so with every genuine preacher. The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from the consciousness of the Christian thinker and student, from the practical experience of life as well as from his Word. Along with the command there goes the blessing; with the commission the promise of protection in its discharge. And the faithful servant of Christ may be assured in like manner that when he is to be employed he will be defended; "the good hand of God" will be upon him (as with Nehemiah) until his work is done. (4) Sketch of his life-work. Its aim is instruction—"to open eyes;" conversion—"to turn men from darkness to light" etc.; induction into the new covenant, or kingdom of grace—"that they may receive forgiveness of sins;" glorification—"a lot among them that are sanctified." Faith in Christ the means to all. He had been following out this Divine programme. He had obeyed without hesitation the heavenly vision, and in various places had been calling men to repentance and to the new life. In the faithful pursuit of his calling and because of it, he had encountered opposition; yet had been supported by God's help to the present day. His teaching was but a continuation and fulfilment of the ancient teaching of the prophets. The three great points of his preaching were—the humiliation of Christ, his resurrection, and the gospel for all nations. So clear, straightforward, manly, and consistent was the tenor of his address.

II. EFFECT UPON THE LISTENERS. 1. *On Festus*. He represents the cynic or indifferentist in matters of religion, or the worldly view of the unspiritual man. Character is "spiritually discerned" only by inward and outward sympathy. The best in Paul was misunderstood, as his worst had been. Says Luther, "The world esteems others as prudent so long as they are mad, and as mad when they cease to be mad and become wise." Saul passed for a wise and able man in the days of his persecuting fury. When he "came to himself," and was clothed in a right mind, he was reckoned mad. One day the tables will be turned, and the children of this world will say, "We fools held his life to be senseless, and now he is numbered among the children of God" (Wisd. v. 5). The deep truth is that the exaltation of the poet, the prophet, the mystic, and the believer are hardly distinguishable to the superficial glance from madness or from sensual intoxication. So was it on the day of Pentecost. And of the Christ himself they said, "He is mad, and hath a devil" (John x. 20). But Paul replies to Festus that the substance of his words is true, and the temper in which he has spoken is rational. The history of Christianity has proved the truth of this. The world in the long run is not governed by unreason, but by reason struggling against unreason. In every popular revival of Christianity there may be seen a manifestation of what looks like folly and unreason; but to a deeper view there is a "method in this madness." 2. *On Agrippa*. Here is an awakened conscience. Paul recognizes in him the stirrings of faith, and boldly aims a blow at his conscience. "Those are the true court preachers who will not be deterred by the star on the breast from asking whether the Morning Star shines in the heart." But Agrippa fences. What he feels he will not avow. He would lead a double life—representing one thing to the world, thinking another himself. He is the type of a numerous class, who would gladly be blessed, were it not for the strait door and the narrow path, which they will not tread (Luke xiii. 24). How near we may be to bliss, yet how far from it! The heart may be touched, the intellect illuminated, the will aroused, the hour acceptable, and yet—some deep stream of passion runs at our feet, which we will not ford; some "cunning bosom sin" keeps out the good angels of repentance and faith that would enter. The reply of Paul to Agrippa's light words again brings out a sharp contrast. Better be the "prisoner of Jesus Christ" than the prisoner of passion! Better the regal freedom of the redeemed man's soul, in poverty and chains, than the splendour of the potentate enslaved by lust and by the fear of men! In the audience-chamber we have thus the most diverse attitudes of mind towards Christianity represented. Paul, in the full inspiration of faith and life in the Son of God; Agrippa, convinced but not converted; Bernice, probably recalcitrant; Festus, hardened in indifferent cynicism. Some wanting little, others much, to make them Christians. But what is the practical difference between almost saved and quite damned? And so, the sermon ended, the audience disperses with commendations on the eloquence of the preacher and the manliness of his bearing. There is a certain tragedy in every such break-up of a congregation.



Every man goes to his own place; and a savour of life unto life or of death unto death has been tasted by many.—J.

Vers. 1—32.—*The apostolic defence in the presence of Festus and Agrippa.* I. THE BEARING OF THE MAN. Dignity, gentleness, courtesy—a true Christian gentleman.

II. THE APPEAL TO FACTS. The incontrovertible evidence. "Once I was a persecutor; now I am a disciple."

III. THE PROCLAMATION OF A DIVINE MISSION. Showing that there was reason in his firmness and confidence; he was divinely sent and would be divinely cared for.

IV. THE CHALLENGE TO TRY HIS DOCTRINE AND WORK BY THE STANDARD OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS. Those who oppose him are the offenders. He is simply a witness. This is the true strength of all God's people. They build on the Word which is already given. They show the harmony between Scripture and fact.

V. THE PERSONAL APPEAL included in the address, both to the Jews and to the heathen. "Would to God you were such as I."

VI. THE DIFFERENT EFFECTS OF THE ADDRESS on the two different men. To the Gentile it was simply foolishness; to the apostate Jew it was a voice of God speaking to the slumbering conscience. Agrippa's irony meant resistance to the Holy Ghost. Although neither were converted, they were both impressed with the simplicity and sincerity and harmlessness of the man. But again the hand of God was over him. Had he been set at liberty, his life would soon have been sacrificed. So Luther's imprisonment in the Wartburg was his protection from enemies.—R.

Ver. 8.—*Resurrection in the light of revelation.* "Why should it be thought," etc.? Grounds of the incredible. Contradiction of reason. Contradiction of experience. Absolute isolation of a fact. A statement is credible because it is rational, because it has been predicted, because it is analogous to and harmonious with experience, because it is morally and practically serviceable to humanity.

I. THE APPEAL TO FAITH. You believe so much; why not this? The Jewish Scriptures contained the doctrine of resurrection. Enoch. Abraham's anticipation of Isaac's resurrection. Moses. Elijah. The teaching of the Psalms and prophets. The growth of the doctrine through the post-Exilian times. Even the heathen not without much that prepared the way for the truth. Doctrine of the dead and of the future life. Longing for the perfection of humanity. Moral helplessness.

II. THE CHALLENGE OF CHRISTIANITY TO PERSONAL ACCEPTANCE. 1. The credible ought to be accepted, if it comes with the evidence of fact. 2. The real root of unbelief is personal and moral. Paul refers to himself, "I was once as you are; but the facts were too much for me." 3. The resurrection is not a mere speculative doctrine or unpractical mystery, but it is the root of the whole system of Christianity; it stands at the entrance of the new way, into which we are all invited, both as sealing the testimony of Christ, and as opening the new world to our faith and setting our affection on things above.—R.

Ver. 18.—*The mission of the gospel to the world.* "To open their eyes," etc.

I. THE STATE OF THE WORLD WITHOUT CHRIST. 1. Darkness. Intellectual. Moral. No exceptions. The light of the Greek and Roman worlds turned by sin into grosser darkness. Superstition. 2. The rule of evil spirits. The power possessed by false teachers. The dominion of the senses. The reign of fear. 3. The condemnation of Divine righteousness. Impossibility that such ignorance should remain. The visitations of judgment. Awful calamities of the ancient world, the working out of sin.

II. THE DISPENSATION OF MERCY. 1. The preparation of light through the ages revealing the Divine purpose. 2. The advent of Jesus Christ and the lifting up of the light into the heavens. 3. The mission of the gospel through its preachers, so different from anything seen in the heathen world. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" 4. The fulfilment of the mission from age to age, and its prospects of speedy accomplishment. They are turning to the light, and all the world shall see the salvation.—R.

Ver. 22.—*The believing retrospect.* "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day." Times when retrospect and the grateful acknowledgment

which flows from it are especially profitable. At the critical junctures of life. When a testimony for God is demanded of us for the sake of others. "Unto this day."

**I. THE HIGHER VIEW OF LIFE.** 1. A mission, a testimony. 2. A co-operation with the Divine work, running parallel with the line of infinite wisdom and righteousness. 3. A gracious fruit of heavenly bestowment. "Help from God." 4. A life lived by prayer, linked on to the throne of grace.

**II. AN ENCOURAGING AND STIMULATING EXAMPLE.** The profitable use which should be made of biography. The lessons of Paul's life. Divine strength made perfect in human weakness. Teaching us: 1. To follow the Spirit. 2. To depend upon the Divine control of circumstances and of the oppositions of men. 3. To maintain confidence and courage by laying hold of a great future. 4. To be bold in speaking for Christ, especially when we can say, as Paul could, that he "said nothing but what the prophets and Moses said." The sure ground is the written Word. To preach ourselves is to obtain no help from God; to magnify his Word is to ensure his blessing and be sustained to the end.—R.

**Ver. 28.—The great decision.** "Then Agrippa said unto Paul," etc. Times when the attitude and bearing of one person wonderfully set forth the majesty of truth. Jesus before Pontius Pilate. Luther at Worms. Paul at Cæsarea. Agrippa face to face with the sincerity he despised; Festus with a religion altogether different from that of Rome. The assembly of courtiers and soldiers and abandoned people in the presence of spiritual reality. The reversal of the appearances. Paul really trying the offenders against God at the bar of Christ's truth. The effect of the simple narrative of facts and its powerful appeals. Though scorn and mockery in Agrippa's words, still confession of his inability to reply. Whether as in Authorized or as in Revised Version, the meaning is the same: "I am not persuaded, though I cannot deny anything you say."

**I. DECIDED CHRISTIANITY** is the only true position. "To be a Christian" is to be fully persuaded. 1. *Decided faith.* Not belief about truth, but persuasion that Jesus is our Saviour. 2. *Essential change.* "To be" that which we were not before. Not a mere change of external position towards Christianity, but the surrender of the whole self to the Law of Christ. 3. *Public profession.* The name "Christian" distinguished the man from others. It was assumed as a pledge of fellowship and united action. The Church is the voice of Christ, his living representative and witness. We must identify ourselves with his body, by being grafted as members into it.

**II. CHRISTIANITY APPEALS TO THOSE WHO ARE OPEN TO PERSUASION.** 1. It is possible to be *unpersuaded*, because inwardly resisting truth, because self-deceived, because demanding that which is not reasonable, as the hardened sceptic, the trifler with opportunity, the proud intellect, the light-minded and pleasure-loving. 2. The commonest and yet most responsible of all positions is that which, like Agrippa's, is *near persuasion*, yet distinctly waiving off the appeal. It is an awful spiritual danger to turn away from an open door. 3. It is better to be persuaded by the gracious appeal than compelled to acknowledge the truth by the overwhelming evidence of judgment. Paul's position before Agrippa a prediction of the future trial of all men, when they shall be manifestly brought into the presence of those who have been persuaded, and the unreasonableness and guilt of their unbelief will be shown forth in contrast with the simple faith and loving obedience of those who shall be honoured with Christ's name and glory upon them. The obstacle to full persuasion should be sought within. There is little more required. Neither the truth itself, nor its method of presentation, nor the circumstances of our life, nor the difficulties of our profession, are any excuse for our remaining unpersuaded. The reality behind the veil of external appearance in the court at Cæsarea. Paul's good conscience, strength, hope, comfort, final victory, all should persuade us to be altogether such as he was then and is now.—R.

**Ver. 3.—The conditions of hearing to profit.** "Wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently." The occasion of these words of the apostle may be justly viewed all round as a model occasion of public speaking for the preacher, and of listening for the hearer. A certain amount of result, and of very powerful result, was gained, though confessedly not all that could have been wished. It is not the less to be noticed that just that

however, *was* gained which may be supposed obtainable by the faithful use of the best human means. And for the rest, the work was stayed where, in the very truest sense, we are warranted to say, "*Permitte cetera Deo*," or the results belong to God. The occasion, perhaps unintentionally enough, reveals the great standing conditions of effective preaching and profiting hearing. There must be —

I. ONE COMPETENT TO SPEAK. 1. He must know his subject. 2. He must feel deeply his subject. 3. He must handle a subject which concerns his hearers, and is neither above them nor beside their needs. 4. He must know the graces of speech, but specially that of respectfulness and courtesy towards those whose ear he wishes to gain. Who might command may sometimes better "*beseech*" (Philem. 8, 9), and so much the more if one thing that he asks for is the thing so rare, so difficult, *patience*.

II. THOSE PREPARED TO HEAR. Different considerations will determine the question in what such preparedness may most truly consist. We have here to do with only a certain human range of preparedness. 1. The hearer must be open, ready, willing to hear and capable of *understanding*. Paul does not speak hollow words. He knows he can make much greater progress with Agrippa than with Festus, because Agrippa was really not unversed in matters of *revealed* truth. 2. The hearer must be prepared to give his mind *patiently* to the great subjects that may be exhibited to him. They are what may well require patience. 3. He must be honest to make decision and to take action on what he has heard. So far Agrippa went a long way towards being "a good hearer" of the Word. 4. If the case be such, he must be ready to give full public profession of his decision. In this Agrippa failed. He and Festus only "*talked between themselves*."—B.

Vers. 6—8.—*The hope of the promise.* It is a thing of deepest interest and significance that we can note so clearly, so repeatedly, what it was ever lay so close to the heart that craved the better, that was not dead, that reached towards light. It was ever that one transporting hope that grows out of the death and *resurrection* of Jesus, the hope of future and eternal life, the vista of an abiding city, a heavenly Canaan, and for their behoof "*an house not made with hands*." We learn here that, under whatever various aspects and with whatever needful accompaniments—

I. THE OLD ORIGINAL REVELATION WAS A REVELATION OF WHAT SHOULD BE THE CONTRADICTION OF SIN'S PRONOUNCED WORK, DEATH. The hope of the promise was the hope of eternal life and of heaven.

II. THAT THIS FIRST REAL REVELATION SHAPED ITSELF IN THE FORM OF A "*PROMISE*," "*MADE OF GOD*," TO A CERTAIN FEW, WHO WOULD HALLOW IT ABOVE ALL ELSE THEY HAD.

III. THAT IT WAS ONE LONG REMEMBERED, CLUNG TO TENACIOUSLY, AND IN THESE RESPECTS WELL JUSTIFYING ITS DIVINE ADAPTATION.

IV. THAT, MISUNDERSTOOD THOUGH IT MIGHT BE, IT TURNED ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, IN ONE TREMENDOUS INSTANCE OF IT, NAMELY, THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

V. THAT, THE FATAL WEAKNESS AND SIN OF THOSE TO WHOM THIS PROMISE, AN HERBLOOM SO PRECIOUS, WAS GIVEN, REVEALED THEMSELVES, WHEN THE VERY HOUR OF UNSPEAKABLE GLORY CAME, AND WITH IT THE TEST CAME, AND NATURE REGARDED REVELATION AS "*INCREDIBLE*," AND THE EYES OF NATURE DISCREDITED THEIR OWN TESTIMONY, THOUGH THE DIVINE FACT WAS THERE, THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS! One of the correctest commentaries on the letter and the spirit of this striking and beautiful passage and the similar parallel passages, is found in the exquisite little poem of J. H. Newman, entitled "*Moses seeing the Land*."

"My father's hope ! my childhood's dream !  
The promise from on high !  
Long waited for ! its glories beam  
Now when my death is nigh.

"My death is come, but not decay ;  
Nor eye nor mind is dim ;  
The keenness of youth's vigorous day  
Thrills in each nerve and limb.



"Blest scene! thrice welcome after toil—  
If no deceit I view;  
Oh, might my lips but press the soil,  
And prove the vision true!

"Its glorious heights, its wealthy plains,  
Its many-tinted groves,  
They call! But he my steps restrains  
Who chastens whom he loves.

"Ah! now they melt . . . they are but shades . . .  
I die!—yet is no rest,  
O Lord! in store, since Canaan fades  
But seen, and not possessed?"

R

**Ver. 11.—***The reckless rushing to assume the moral responsibilities of others—an exceeding madness.* We are to understand this extraordinary verse to reveal rather what Paul confesses it was in his heart to do, and in the nature of his own actions to cause others to do, than what he succeeded in doing, in all respects. The two or three touches give us a wonderfully and strangely vivid picture. And suggest, not so much for Paul who confessed and forsook his evil way, but for many others who do neither the one nor the other, how suicidal their course, when, discontent with the weight of their own responsibilities, they would presume to tamper with the conscience of others, and lade themselves with some share in all that is most dread of the moral nature of their fellows. Let us notice that those who will forcibly seek to interfere with the moral and religious convictions of others do—

I. RUN THE GREAT RISK OF INFLUENCING OTHERS TO SIN AGAINST THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.

II. PRESUME TO SUPPOSE THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE TO BE THE ABSOLUTELY SAFE STANDARD.

III. EXPOSE THEMSELVES, ON NO GREATER WARRANT, TO STAYING A GOOD WORK THAT OTHERWISE WAS GROWING IN THE HEART OF ANOTHER.

IV. VERY POSSIBLY AVAIL TO MAKE PRONOUNCED BLASPHEMERS, BACKSLIDERS, APOSTATES.

V. BECOME AT LEAST STUMBLING-BLOCKS TO OTHERS, AND CAUSES OF LOSS AND PERHAPS OF INFINITE MENTAL PAIN AND DISASTROUS CONFLICT TO THEM. Against every one of these courted responsibilities Christ's own clearest warnings are offered, and his calmest, most solemn judgments pronounced upon those who taught them.—B.

**Ver. 18.—***The ascended Saviour's description of his own work among men.* From the suddenly opened window of heaven into the suddenly opened ear of Paul, the ascended Jesus conveys in very brief the description of the work his gospel is to accomplish in the heart and life of the saved. The present description is fivefold. Each various representation of Christ's work in the world invites our grateful, loving attention. Each such fresh representation throws fresh hues of beauty and of loveliness upon our own appreciation of the work. Jesus says here that he sends Paul to do five things for men, in his Name, by his warrant, through aid of his power.

I. TO RESTORE A FACULTY. Whatever things men see, who see not Christ, Divine truth, the deep needs and grand opportunities of their own souls, they see the unimportant instead of the all-important. This is *not* to have the eye open, but shut.

II. TO TURN RESTORED VISION FROM THE DREAD VANITY OF DARKNESS TO ALL THE WEALTH OF LIGHT AND OF WHAT LIGHT CAN SHOW. The power Jesus gives he satisfies. The craving he implants he provides for. The hope he awakens he will not deceive. The eye he opens shall not wander and grope and bemoan darkness, dimness, vague mist, but field after field of higher light and Diviner prospect shall feed its rejoicing sense.

III. TO RESCUE MEN FROM A FIERCE, LONG, CONFESSED THRALDOM AND STARTLE THEM WITH RENEWED TITLE OF SONS OF GOD, INSTEAD OF SLAVES OF SATAN.

IV. TO GIVE THEM THE HEALING, COMFORTING, ASSURING PRESENT GIFT OF PARDON

OF THE PAST. Of what a fearful load will this at once relieve them! How dreadful the outlook still is made, whatever it *might* be, if it is haunted by the visions of the past, nay, far more, overtaken by the dead hand of the past, and stricken down in every attempt of its own hand, because of the overwhelming *arrears* due! That which might be the brightest future is dashed by memories only sometimes, but much more by memories that come barbed with sternest actual pains and with demands that cannot be satisfied.

V. TO FIND THEM A PLACE AMONG A PEOPLE TRAINED BY A NEW, A SPECIAL, A HIGHEST KIND OF TRAINING. The place is found beyond a doubt here, as truly as there can be, as there is a "heaven on earth." In its perfection it is to be found, when years upon years have rolled; ever till then, holding out the thought of home, the haven of rest, the heart of perfect peace, the Church of ravishing worship, the unimaginable bliss of heaven, whatever that may be, and of God himself. How vast that contrast! What a change and growth from the first to this fifth stage! Now first our eye needs to be opened, then what will it be when each blessed one may say, "As for me, I behold thy face in righteousness; I am satisfied, awake, with thy likeness"—B.

Ver. 18 (end).—*Christ's own stress laid on faith in a personal object.* "And an inheritance among them that are sanctified," etc. The utterances of the ascended Saviour to the man who was to be in a double sense the great first apostle of his religion to all the world cannot but be regarded by us as invested with the very fullest interest. The philosophy of religion is simple with Jesus; and he throws into clear prominence certain things, which may surely mark for us the prominence we should give them. Notice—

I. THE MANIFEST STRESS LAID ON FAITH IN THE PERSON CHRIST. "Faith, that which centres in me." So we may justly expound the words of Christ. Jesus speaks thus emphatically to protect against mysticism, defeat, deviation. 1. Faith in a living person can mean nothing short of general trust in him (unless particular qualification be expressed, *e.g.* faith in a person as a *financier*, etc.) and great trust in him, unless some qualification of measure be expressly stated, as is never done to Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ will include, therefore, (1) trust in his teaching; (2) trust in his example; (3) trust in his loving, sympathetic guidance; (4) trust in *all* that he says, in *all* that in his providence he does; (5) trust in the worthiness of his service; as well as (6) trust on the part of the soul's deepest demands for him, in his last "power to save." 2. The service or office of faith is here suggested. It is not remarked on here in its elevating influence on the individual character, and in its present points of superiority over sight for such a nature as ours. But it is instanced in its function as the link of connection, real, vital connection, between Christ and any man. It has, *in itself*, elevating as are the conception and the gradual training inherent in it, no sufficient, no sovereign, certainly no saving, efficacy. It is nothing that is to be depended upon, *of and in itself*. But it leads to One, unites to One, keeps an open communication with One, and clings mightily to the end unto One, who *is to be depended on*, with all the heart, and mind, and strength, and soul. 3. The great calm, peace, divinest content and foretaste of heaven's own happiness that are commanded by real trust should always be credited to faith in Christ. If these fail and when they fail, it is not that faith fails of its office, or that Christ fails of his goodness, but that men sever this golden link awhile, or let this golden conduit pitifully leak awhile.

II. THE PLACE GIVEN TO FAITH IN THE PERSONAL CHRIST IN RELATION TO SANCTIFICATION. It appears from this pronouncement of Jesus that "faith that is in him" is responsible for our sanctification. There is no limitation to the statement that sanctification depends on faith in Jesus. 1. It rises out of that faith or trust already spoken of. Without the real and living connection with Christ, there would be no entrance possible to the knowledge and the privileges which come with him. 2. It is fed the whole way along by the truth, the example, the guidance, the sympathizing love, of Jesus. 3. It avails to take away that surest foe of all to sanctification, *trust in self*, at one stroke, but a stroke that must be felt life's length. 4. Up to the very last, it is that simplest, purest, most depending trust of the soul on Jesus when it faces "the valley," and "the river," and "the shadow," and "the unknown," which completes, so far as we can trace it at all, the sanctification of man. If at that last moment

the bond of faith should break, alas! all would break. But *in* that last moment, what reason we have to think that there is One who makes its strength equal to *all* the strain which by any possibility could be put upon it!

III. THE PLACE BELONGING TO FAITH IN THE PERSONAL CHRIST AS THE WAY TO "THE INHERITANCE." "The inheritance," it distinctly appears, is that of a prepared place for a prepared people. The preparation is *one*; it is that of sanctification attained by faith only. The way to "the inheritance," therefore, cannot be found, except by the paths of faith, the "faith that is in Christ." And the review of the whole would teach us that it were well-nigh impossible to summarize more forcibly and briefly in one the offices of "faith that is in Christ." His own is the emphasis here given to it. And he shows that it runs like a golden cord through the whole work of redemption.—B.

Ver. 19.—*The make of a heavenly vision, and its use.* These words are part of Paul's own description of his conversion. He has been telling the fact, and explaining the manner and circumstances of it. In fewest words he has spoken of the blinding light from heaven at midday, but far above the brightness of a midday sun; of the voice which he heard when prostrate on the earth; of its summons to him to rise, and to be ready promptly to begin a career of activity and of danger perhaps, alike unparalleled. Then calling it altogether a "vision," and a "heavenly vision," he says, "I was not disobedient to it." For three days he remained blind; for three days, so complete was the mastery of mind over body, he did neither eat nor drink. They led him by the hand to Damascus; there the Divine will and purpose concerning him were further unfolded to him by Ananias; and there he found a grateful shelter awhile with Christ's disciples—those very persons whom he had set out to discomfit and persecute. Twenty-seven years, or thereabout, have now passed away, and looking back on that time, Paul says—and the trial of those twenty-seven years amply bear him out—"Whereupon . . . I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." It will be instructive to notice—

I. WHAT IT IS WHICH PAUL HERE TERMS A "HEAVENLY VISION." The charm of words often beguiles, sometimes misleads, and, like distance, lends enchantment to the view. A heavenly vision—must not every one covet it? Certainly every one would not covet this of Paul's. A "heavenly vision," if given, must it not be irresistible? Will it not be made of fairy forms, of rainbow colours, of angel movements, of seraphs' music? Poetry and dream, imagination and the refinedness of inspiration,—these will be the material and make of it. But, no, it is not so; it was not so now. A heavenly vision may be as practical, of matter as hard, of manner as unceremonious and unwelcome, as the most ordinary reality of our everyday vexed and harassed life. In *this*, every one of us finds occasionally the hard knocks of hard facts, and so we may in a heavenly vision. And *this* was the kind of which Paul here speaks. The light was bright, but not with fancy's brightness, but with blinding effect. For the rest, judge in one moment the characteristics of the heavenly vision that, beginning with blinding, goes on by giving the strong rider a heavy fall to the earth. No dreamy whisperings succeed, nor strains seraphic, but summons short and sharp, with his name twice repeated. The remonstrant and upbraiding questions succeed, and fear and trembling and unknown astonishment are the result. This sort of vision, whatever it may be *called*, is, according to our general thought, *not* so much of heavenly as of earthly things. Yet these were the facts of Paul's vision, and equally fact is it that he terms it *heavenly*. And here is our lesson, that the warnings from heaven, and the persuasions that come from heaven, and the instructions that date from heaven, *may*, while we stay here, savour and have to savour *much* of the material and the methods of earth, so far as regards the instruments of them. The heavenly vision shall best justify its name often for you, when it apprizes you experimentally, *not* of the delicious sensations of angels, but of the fear and trembling and anguished amazement that pertain to sinful hearts and injured consciences. Paul was right; for his vision did come from heaven, and it pointed up to heaven, and it led him back with it to heaven, and an innumerable host of others also. Hard fare brought the prodigal back to himself and home to his father; and it was so with Paul, severe and unceremonious handling brought Paul to himself and his Saviour and his life-work; and it may be so with us, that hard blows and smarting wounds and crowding cares may be



the appointed means of calling us to ourselves, our God, and our home. So also when these come to me, even me, *me myself*, is it not the equivalent of the name named, and sharply named twice, "Saul, Saul"? We often individually doubt our mercies, and fail to give God praise for them; seldom do we fail to cry out individually because of our pains, or to murmur at God because of them.

II. HOW PAUL SAYS HE TREATED IT. The treatment which Paul returned for his most merciful, but so to call it rough, usage in this heavenly vision, was prompt attention, practical obedience. The kindest, gentlest providences you may so abuse that they turn into bitter, hard experiences, and memories of pain and shame. The hardest, sternest providences may be so accepted, so treated, that they become transmuted into the brightest spots of memory, the happiest realities of a painful life, and the undoubted points of departure for a new and holier life. Of what seem the unlikeliest materials, it is possible to secure heavenly advantage—by obedience to the *convictions*, the *thoughts*, the *suggestions* that come of the pain and darkness and fearful care that were inwrap in them. For what reason, however, does Paul say, "I was 'not disobedient,'" instead of "I was obedient"? 1. Perhaps he chooses his expression of real, deep modesty before God. "Disobedient," he thought to himself, "I will no longer be," and that thought lingered still with him, though, as to being fully and adequately obedient, "who is sufficient for it?" The twenty-seven years that have now sped away have just done this for him, made him feel that to be perfectly obedient will need an energy and an unfalteringness never seen below the sun, except in the one Lord and Master himself. 2. Or was the mode of Paul's language rather due to the thought, perhaps all but unconsciously felt, that disobedience was the broad road and wide gate, whereto the many go in, the million to one! and he *had* been long of the number? But Paul would say, "Being 'by the grace of God what I am,' I would no longer be disobedient, nor 'walk in their counsel.'" Use we then our providences, though dark and stern, and let us not be *unfaithful* to their suggestions. It will be a great step towards baulking the fruitfulness of evil, and towards producing an abundant fruitfulness of good. To be not disobedient may soon usher in the ambition and the joys of a real and hearty obedience. The word may tremble on human lip, to say, "I have been obedient," but with a good conscience before man and God, Paul prefers to say, "I was not disobedient."—B.

Ver. 20.—*The mission and burden of the evangelist.* Three great themes are here announced by Paul. They stand in close relation with one another. The chain of truth and of highest duty is short, of three links, but most strong and most useful. The apostle, describing his own great work as the first evangelist to the wide world, describes for all time and for all place the work of the evangelist. However far beyond religion may go, may be taught, may develop itself to an opening eye, a quickened imagination, a deepening heart, and an inspired outlook, it begins here, and rests on these three things. The preacher of Christ to humanity *must preach*—

I. REPENTANCE. 1. Conviction of sin. 2. Deep sorrow for sin. 3. Confession of sin.

II. THE CONDITION—THAT MAN "TURN TO GOD." There is, no doubt, a *crisis* in the inner life, in the very man himself, called fitly the *turning to God*. Let it be produced as it may; let it be concealed or manifest as it may; let it be short and sharp and very defined to day and hour, or the reverse; yet this is a fact in the moral spiritual history of one called by Christ and obeying that call. So much so that the call itself shall in part be worded thus: "Turn;" "Turn to God;" "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?" The reversal of the old life, old character, old principle of action, cannot be more plainly asserted as a necessity.

III. THE NECESSITY—OF PRACTICAL HOLINESS OF LIFE. Christ will not allow profession, will not accept mysticism, does not acknowledge vague dreaming, nor admit the idler. Change from the old, honest departure from the past, reality of a new future, are his watchwords.—B.

Vers. 22, 23.—*A good confession.* If Festus and Agrippa had known half of what Paul had been passing through since his journey to Damascus was so peremptorily stopped, they would well understand why he interposes the acknowledgment, so full of dependence and of humble gratitude, "Therefore having obtained help of God, I con-

tinue unto this day." Paul takes credit to himself for neither his work, nor suffering, nor safety. These are all due to his sovereign "Leader" and "Commander" and Protector. But he makes a good confession indeed, one, if true—and none deny its truth—most worthy of imitation, of all and every one who would in any measure be a follower in his work. He claims justly, and not boastfully, but for manifestly other reason, that he has maintained—

I. A PERSEVERING WITNESS.

II. AN IMPARTIAL WITNESS.

III. AN UNCHANGING CONSISTENT SCRIPTURAL WITNESS. Paul wishes to lay stress on this, that he had been to "the Law and the testimony and the prophets;" and had been *true* to them; had not gone beside nor beyond them, and had not fallen short of them, as his people and opponents were, in fact, guilty of doing.

IV. A STRONG WITNESS TO FOUR THINGS IN ESPECIAL. These *were* the four grand truths imbedded in the Law, enshrined in the testimony, and many a time bursting out like hope's own light from the prophets. These were (1) the death, (2) the resurrection, of Christ; (3) the "great Light" he would be to "his people," (4) to all the world.

V. A WITNESS MARVELLOUSLY OWNED BY THE "HELP OF GOD." In a lower sense, no doubt, but in a very true sense, Paul had done and suffered the things that none other could, "save God were with him."—B.

Vers. 24—32.—*A threefold illustration of the irrepressible energy of the truth.* This paragraph has its value, and that a great value, in the *grouping* of its contents. And the three members that make the group are worthy each of individual consideration as well. But here we notice only certain great though general facts.

I. THE ENERGY OF TRUTH. It will not let Festus remain silent in the court. Immediately afterwards it shows that Agrippa cannot persuade himself to hold his peace before the prisoner and the court. And lastly, it finds them something to say "between themselves," in private, and that something was certainly a witness to the right.

II. THE SUCCESS OF THE ENERGY OF TRUTH IN VERY VARIOUS CHARACTERS. Festus and Agrippa were as different in race, religion, character, as perhaps could be. But while the force of truth makes them both find an utterance when it had been wiser for them had they kept silence, yet how amazingly different those utterances were! Festus taxes Paul with madness. Agrippa, whether utterly serious or not, bears testimony to the influence he feels from what Paul says, in its persuasiveness. Neither of them refuse, even though the case is involved in all possible publicity, to leave the last word with Paul. He does, as it were, hold the field, and in a very real sense finds himself left, not only in his own heart, but in the "pomp" of that open court, master of the field.

III. THE REVENGE THAT THE ENERGY OF TRUTH TAKES. When open honour is not done spontaneously to it, its victory not proclaimed, and its rights smothered, how superficially soever, it secures its own in a yet more emphatic way. It secures a place indelible *for itself*, and on a page that shall endure to all time; and it owes *nothing* to human favour, no thanks to human patronage, no atom of indebtedness to any lifting hand of the great, the wise, the mighty, the proud. Never mind all the suppression of these, it *transpires*, and it gets all it needs from the very rehearsal of how they suppressed (vers. 30—32).—B.

Vers. 24—26.—*An unwilling contribution to the truth.* The *phenomena* presented by Festus when, in struggling to insult the truth, he strengthens the body of testimony to it, are to be noticed. They are simply as follows:—

I. FESTUS CANNOT DENY THE SIGNS OF LEARNING IN ITS ADVOCATE. How many a time gospel truth has been derided because of the signs of *ignorance* in its advocates! The enemies of the gospel of almost all kinds love *learning*, would appraise it highly, and times without number have professed that this is their *desideratum*. But now it is all the contrary.

II. FESTUS NOTES OBSERVANTLY THE SIGNS OF A FULL, DEEP ENTHUSIASM IN THE ADVOCATE OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

III. FESTUS FINDS HIMSELF UTTERLY OUT OF SYMPATHY WITH SUCH SIGNS.

IV. FESTUS MUST FIND SOMETHING TO SAY AND FIT TO BE SAID FROM THE SEAT OF AUTHORITY.

V. IN HIS DIFFICULTY FESTUS IS BETRAYED INTO THE HUGEST ERROR.

VI. THE "LOUD VOICE" OF FESTUS DIES OUT, AND GIVES PLACE TO FIRM THOUGH RESPECTFUL CONTRADICTION OF THE PRISONER. The theory of the "madness" of Paul—not a whisper is heard of it again.—B.

Vers. 28, 29.—*A mournful "almost," on a light lip.* If these words of Agrippa were spoken satirically, as some think, or were intended to express even the essence of satire, yet after all, this would make very little difference to the standpoint from which we consider them. It would make a great difference indeed to Agrippa himself, but would scarcely diminish aught from the many lessons we may gather from them. Agrippa, too, like Festus, it would appear, felt compelled to make some pronouncement from the chair of authority, but again (notable to observe), the last word lay with Paul. And "a word" indeed it was! This episode, consisting of Agrippa's behaviour on this occasion, may be justly viewed in the following lights. It illustrates—

I. THE AMAZING ENERGY OF GOSPEL TRUTH AGAINST WONDERFULLY SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES. Many of these obstacles are most easily imagined. But take this one, as typical of the rest, that from Agrippa, being who he was, where he was, and closely surrounded by the company in which he was, should be wrung, and yet without any appearance of its being wrung, such a confession! Supposing that the language of Agrippa does *not* mean to own to the experience of any deep emotion or of any powerful impression produced upon him, still that Agrippa can put these words, spiced with taunting, as they then were, upon his lips, was indicative of something very different from scouting and scorning (as Festus would have done) the most distant approach to the thought.

II. THE AMAZING ENERGY OF AN OPPOSING HUMAN NATURE. For the practical issue of all was that Agrippa remained *himself*. He did *not* come over to Paul or to Paul's Master. He did remain with Festus, himself and his sins both "secret" and "presumptuous."

III. THE POINT WHERE THIS HUMAN NATURE WON. Human and sinful nature won, either at the point of "almost"—that so well-known "almost" of conviction, inborn, but for all that *still*-born!—or at the point of a very trifling easy gibe made to do duty for the hour, nay, it was only the moment. Paul has just, undenied, claimed Agrippa, as versed both in Law and in fact. Agrippa cannot, does not, deny it. But that his knowledge may seem to make him look a little less small in the eyes of Festus and the court around, at what he cannot deny, he can indulge in a fling—the fling that of a man who says, "You'll find it no so easy matter to make me real, true, sincere, and ready to give in to what nevertheless I cannot deny." Paul must have thought now of the heart that is in man, "We are not ignorant of its devices."

IV. THE POSITION WHICH THE SINCERE ADVOCATE OF GOSPEL TRUTH HOLDS EVEN WHEN MOST OPPRESSED. For the closing language of Paul—so pitying, so meek, so Saviour-like, so yearning—was indeed a triumph of God's grace and of goodness in man. At the unlikely moment the lips of Paul breathe out what sounds like nothing else so much as a parting benediction, a forgiving prayer, an irresistible argument of most pathetic affection. He would pour oil on the troubled waters, he would reduce the storm to a Divine calm, he would cover up all a sinful, shameful, humiliating past with the love and forgiveness and hope that must in a moment overspread all the scene, if only Agrippa were such in the salvation of Jesus as he was, less his chains. Why, there was no comparison for one moment then between the real glory of Paul and the varnished brilliance of Agrippa. So God secures his own. So Jesus is mindful of his true servants. So the Spirit puts wisdom into the heart and words into the lips of those faithful to his inspiration. And the insulted prisoner dispenses reward and punishment to his judges.—B.

Vers. 30—32.—*Secret acquittals.* These closing verses of a chapter thrilling with interest suggest the subject of the various acquittals that men both good and bad obtain. The range of value belonging to acquittals received by men from men is vast indeed. They stand in strange contrast to the one acquittal or one condemnation which



awaits each and every man in his turn, on the threshold of the hereafter. The present passage, however, will confine attention to one class of acquittals rather than invite thought to range at large. And we may think—

**I. OF THE SECRET ACQUITTAL OF MAN BY MEN.** 1. The man is innocent: his judges know it; their inner judgment acquits him; their very lips acquit him, but only "between themselves." They say it not to the innocent accused, not to the accusers, not to the world. Their *real* verdict transpires—God takes care of that—but it is no thanks to them, and it is not the good it should be to him, the victim of their injustice, who was given to them that they might do justice. This is *one* sort of secret acquittal. 2. The man is guilty: his judges know it; their deepest judgment finds him guilty; their lips pronounce it "between themselves." And circumstances are such that they pronounce their verdict of guilty before man also. Yet for all that, the secret thought of their heart is that they will acquit, and their covered deed is acquittal. They mete not out equal justice. Their weights and balances are not fair and just. They condone and countenance—the criminal. And this is *another* sort of secret acquittal, as mischievous and disastrous as any can be. For such as these nothing can be said except the words of rebuke, of unsparing condemnation, of well-visited scorn.

**II. OF THE SECRET ACQUITTAL OF A TRUE MAN'S OWN CONSCIENCE.** The brightest pages of history are written with instances of this kind of secret acquittal. From Joseph—and, were all the truth known, from a much earlier than Joseph—to the perfect, the sublime, the spotless innocence of Jesus, and again with fresh impulse onward by Stephen, and Paul, and Peter, and John, and the martyrs, and an unnumbered host, of whom the world was not worthy!—the record of such acquittal is safely written. What a wonderful resource an innocent conscience! What a store of peace it means! What a defence against misery, anguish, remorse, and hell on earth! It is already the bud of Heaven's unspeakable bliss.

**III. OF THE SECRET ACQUITTAL OF GOD'S OWN VERDICT.** At present, God's verdict is often veiled from view, silent for the ear as the star that shines the most distant and the coldest—and all the scene seems filled up with sight and sound of human judgment. Yet two things are to be said. 1. That the man who thinks knows that this is only the surface appearance; that a time far otherwise conditioned hastens to meet this present scene, and prepares a strange reversal. 2. That to the heart of the humble, God-fearing man, there is given the individual and most precious earnest of Divine approval and complacency and love many a time. That peace which the world cannot give God's secret acquittal does give, and it is the sort of peace that both "sheds itself abroad" with all the swiftness and persuasiveness of fragrance itself, and preserves the sacred secret of its sweetness. Whatever else Paul had or had not, he had three acquittals, and they were all for the present secret—the acquittal of the unjust judges, and this was no usual honour; of his own conscience; and of the holy Master and God.—B.

**Ver. 5.—St. Paul a Pharisee.** Very remarkable is the skill shown by the apostle in the adaptation of his defences before different rulers. This Agrippa prided himself upon his Jewish knowledge, and would be quite familiar with the Jewish sects. The offences charged against St. Paul related chiefly to Jewish ceremonial and rights, so the apostle could make no answer which would influence Agrippa so certainly as the answer given in the text, "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." Agrippa would know that a man born and brought up as a Pharisee was not in the least likely to offend against the customs and rites which that body so jealously preserved. Conybeare and Howson say, "Not only was Paul a Pharisee, but his fathers and teachers belonged to this sect. This is nearly all we know of St. Paul's parents. We can conceive of the apostle as born in the Pharisaic family, and as brought up from his infancy in the 'straitest sect' of the Jewish religion. His childhood was nurtured in the strictest belief, as he had before him the example of his fathers, who prayed and walked with broad phylacteries, and were scrupulous and exact in their legal observances. He had, moreover, the memory and tradition of ancestral piety, for he tells us that he served God 'from his forefathers.' Everything, therefore, tended to prepare him to be an eminent member of that theological party to which so many of the Jews

were looking for the preservation of their natural life, and extension of their natural breed." Compare St. Paul's account of himself as given in Gal. i. 14; Phil. iii. 5, 6. We dwell on the fact of St. Paul's Pharisaic birth, education, and sympathies, in order to show—

**I. HOW THESE AFFECTED HIS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS.** He ought to have been peculiarly acceptable to the Jews. The bias of his life was wholly in favour of ceremonial Judaism. He might have been looked to as one of the noblest champions of Mosaism. He did come out as a leader of the party which persecuted the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. He had never separated himself from the Jewish rites and ordinances. To the close of life he maintained his Pharisaism. He pleaded, indeed, for liberty from ritual bonds on behalf of the Gentile converts, but he did not take the liberty for himself; so that, if the Jews had not yielded to blinding prejudice, they might have found in this Christian Pharisee the conservator of all the essentials of Mosaism. It should be clearly seen that St. Paul at once admitted the new light that came from God, and jealously conserved the old, which had also come from him. No doubt the apostle saw that the Jewish system would fade away, and give place to a spiritual religion for which simpler forms would suffice; but it was no part of his mission to hurry on the time of the passing away. His point was this—Jewish bonds must not be laid on Gentile converts. Judaism cannot be aggressive; it must keep well within its own lines and limits.

**II. HOW ST. PAUL'S PHARISAISM BORE UPON THE CHARGES MADE AGAINST HIM.** It made those charges seem ridiculous. One brought up as a zealous Pharisee insultingly defiling the sacred temple was simply absurd. Such a man could not have done such a thing. And the assumption further was that the public teachings of such a man could not be out of harmony with true Judaism. Men are true to themselves: they do not make themselves ridiculous by such open inconsistencies. St. Paul may plead in answer to all their charges, "I was, I am, a Pharisee."

**III. HOW ST. PAUL'S PHARISAIC EDUCATION BECAME A PREPARATION FOR HIS CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIFE.** Such an education established a strong conviction concerning three things. 1. The direct ruling and intervention of Jehovah, so that, at any time, any of his servants might have direct and personal communications from him. The fathers and the prophets had received such revelations, and revelations and visions may come to men still. 2. The importance of Holy Scripture, as given by inspiration of God. 3. And the expectation of Messiah, as fulfilling Scripture prophecy and promise. It may easily be shown how these Pharisaic sentiments prepared for (1) the vision at Damascus; (2) the key which that vision gave to Scripture, and especially to the figure of Messiah presented in the Scripture. Compare the difference of result if St. Paul had been by birth and education a doubting, sceptical Sadducee. True Christianity is the natural and proper outcome of true Pharisaism. Those who were loyal to the idea of the theocracy, and to the Scripture as the human expression of the Divine will and purpose, ought to have been led to a full acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, the Saviour, the Son of God. Illustrate and impress that in a man's early years is displayed the character that is to distinguish his whole life; and that we are all greatly dependent on the tone of the influences that surround our infancy and childhood. Manhood should not, indeed, witness the mere continuance of childhood's prejudices, it should be the true and worthy development, adaptation, and application of childhood's principles.—R. T.

**Ver. 6.—The Messianic promise.** "The words of this verse include the whole expectation of a Divine kingdom, of which the Christ was to be the Head, as well as the specific belief in a resurrection of the dead." It is said of the early revelations of God, by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners" (Revised Version). And the presentation of Messiah in the Old Testament Scriptures has been likened to the painting of a great picture, on which, during the many ages, many hands have worked. At first we have but the barest outline figure, drawn by God himself in the promise to our first parents. Then patriarch, lawgiver, judge, king, poet, and prophet in their turn become artist-painters, and help to fill in the wondrous outline, until in the later days of Isaiah the Messiah stands forth full and clear before us, the suffering,

conquering King. Dealing with the scriptural promise of Messiah, the Prince and Saviour, we note—

I. THAT IT WAS EARLY GIVEN. In the world's very morning. In the first hours of the world's sin and woe. Almost before the shadow of man's sin could fall upon his life, God sent forth this great ray of hope.

II. THAT IT WAS OFTEN RENEWED. For every generation; for every new set of circumstances. In ever-varied forms. With a gracious advancing clearness and fulness. The actual instances provide the illustrations. For lists of them, see appendices to modern Bibles.

III. THAT IT WAS STRANGELY MISCONCEIVED. Because men would not take the Messianic figure as a whole, but chose the parts of it which they preferred. And because men did not take the revelation in its simplicity, but read it in the light of their circumstances, and especially of their temporal necessities. So a nation whose liberty had been taken from them only saw in Messianic promise a liberator, a Judas Maccabeus, a triumphing prince, after the pattern indicated by Daniel. Messiah is for men, not for Jews only, for sinners, and not for an enslaved nation only.—R. T.

Ver. 8.—*The incredibility of the resurrection.* This sudden appeal appears to be made for two reasons. 1. Because Agrippa professed to believe in the Scriptures, which certainly contained records of resurrections (see 1 Kings xvii. 17—23; 2 Kings iv. 18—37). 2. Because the Sadducee party was the one which was most active against the apostle, and they were chiefly offended by his preaching the doctrine of the resurrection, based upon the resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah. Possibly St. Paul may have known that the doctrine of resurrection was a stumbling-block and hindrance to Agrippa. Men in all ages have stumbled at the difficulty of resurrection. It appears to be so contrary to the order of nature; and, so far as human power and skill are concerned, death is so manifestly an irremediable woe. But is resurrection incredible? Three answers may be given.

I. THAT DEPENDS UPON THE EVIDENCES OF THE FACT. It is credible enough if it can be adequately proved. And the test case must be the resurrection of our Lord. It is not enough to dismiss this case as miraculous; we must fairly consider the proofs of the fact. Review them as given by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv., and set them alongside the historical details given in the Gospels, showing the credibility of the witnesses, etc. The position taken by Hume is a very presumptuous one, that it is more likely the evidence is false than that the miraculous event is true. No fact of history can be received unless its testimony is accepted without prejudice.

II. THE RESURRECTION IS NOT THE GREATEST OF MIRACLES. If we can accept greater, it cannot be unreasonable to accept it. St. Augustine well expresses this point. He says, "It is a greater miracle to make that which is not than to repair that which is. Why cannot God raise us after we are turned into dust, who, if we ever were reduced to nothing, could give us a being?" To create man is a greater miracle than to re-create him; and we are not unreasonable in asserting that he who can accomplish the one can certainly accomplish the other.

III. THE WORLD IS FULL OF ANALOGIES WHICH HELP TO MAKE REASONABLE THE BELIEF IN RESURRECTION. These are fully given in works on the resurrection, and are familiarly used in sermons on this topic. Especially may analogies be found in spring-time resurrections and insect changes. Science, too, finds analogies, for it discovers that nothing really is destroyed, but all things reappear in other and varied forms. It is but a beginning of argument on behalf of the sure and sublime truth of the resurrection, but it is an important beginning to be able to say—It is not a thing incredible that God should raise the dead.—R. T.

Vers. 22, 23.—*St. Paul's message compared with prophecy.* Reference to and support from Holy Scripture was a characteristic feature of the apostle's public teachings and preachings. To understand the importance of this feature of his work we should take into consideration not only the general views entertained of Scripture as the revealed and authoritative Word of God, but also, and more particularly, the sentiment concerning Scripture cherished by pious Jews. It is almost impossible to exaggerate in speaking of their reverence for it. It was their final court of appeal. It was the



voice of their God to them. It was the ground of their hope that Messiah, the Deliverer and Prince, would come. It may also be noticed that they much more readily found Messianic references in prophecy and promise than we can do; and we find it difficult to see the points which even the New Testament writers make, probably because our characteristic logical and critical qualities of mind differ so materially from the figurative and imaginative characteristics of the Eastern mind. How St. Paul used appeals to Scripture, and especially Scripture prophecy, may be illustrated from his speech at Antioch in Pisidia (ch. xiii. 16—41), and from his Epistles. Further illustration of the method, as peculiar to the apostles and Christian teachers, may be found in St. Peter's speech at Pentecost, and the Epistle to the Hebrews. In our text Moses is mentioned with the prophets, because there were some who placed the Pentateuch in a higher rank than the rest of the Old Testament Scriptures. St. Paul gives the leading points of his preaching, and affirms, what he would be prepared quite fully to illustrate and to prove, that these points are not really new, but have been all foreshadowed and declared by Jehovah's prophets. He takes three topics. 1. Messiah was to suffer. 2. Messiah was to rise from the dead. 3. Messiah was to be the Light of life to both Jew and Gentile.

I. MESSIAH WAS TO SUFFER, or should be capable of suffering. "The great body of the Jews had fixed their thoughts only on the prophetic visions of the glories of the Messiah's kingdom. Even the disciples of Jesus were slow to receive any other thought than that of conquest and triumph. It was not until they were led, after the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, into our Lord's own school of prophetic interpretation, and taught to recognize the under-current of types and prophecies that pointed to a righteous Sufferer as well as to a righteous King, that they were able to receive the truth." Show (1) the prophetic figure of a suffering Messiah from Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii., with references to passages in Jeremiah and Lamentations; and (2) point out how precisely the historical facts of our Lord's sufferings fit into the preparatory prophecy.

II. MESSIAH WAS TO RISE FROM THE DEAD. Illustrate the prophecies on this point from Ps. xvi. 10; xxx. 3; xli. 10; cxviii. 7; Hosea vi. 2, etc. Show how the fact of his resurrection answers to the prophecy. Aid may be found in St. Peter's speeches recorded in ch. ii. and iii.

III. MESSIAH WAS TO BE THE LIGHT OF LIFE TO BOTH JEW AND GENTILE. This had been one of St. Paul's strongest points, and he had abundant Old Testament references to show that Messiah's mission was not limited to Jews. Refer in illustration to Ps. xlv.; Isa. xi. 10; xlii. 1, etc. Show that the apostle could direct attention to the fact that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles by the vision given to St. Peter at Joppa, and the admission of Cornelius to the Church. He could also plead that in the Gentile cities God had attended the preaching of his gospel with the power of the Holy Ghost, and Churches among the Gentiles had been founded on the faith of Christ. So prophecy had been fulfilled; it was satisfied in Jesus of Nazareth, who suffered for our sins, rose again for our justification, and is preached in all the world as the all-sufficient Saviour.—R. T.

Ver. 29.—"*Both almost, and altogether.*" By comparing the translation of ver. 28 in the Revised Version, it will be seen that the traditional associations of the words cannot be maintained, and that Agrippa had other thoughts than those which are usually supposed. But it is certain that St. Paul made use of Agrippa's words to point a persuasion, and recognized the possibility of the state which may be described as "almost a Christian." And so we are still justified in basing a homily on the condition of the "almost persuaded" upon this passage. The subject may be pleasantly introduced by a description of the pompous scene. Agrippa prided himself upon his semi-royalty, and so Festus arranged for as much of state grandeur as possible. St. Paul was brought chained to his soldier-guard, and spoke with but one hand free. His fervour and eloquence moved Agrippa more than he cared to admit even to himself. He dreaded any further pressure, and therefore tried to turn aside the apostle's pleadings with the lightness of a laugh. St. Paul was too much in earnest to take the king other than seriously, and so he responds with the passion and persuasion of our text. He turns the king's words into a plea against continuing any longer in an unsaving relation to Christianity. And still we find in regard to vital personal religion, that very

many come up, as it were, to the door, but do not enter in. There are amongst us many—very many—who are only *almost Christians*.

I. WHO AMONG US MAY WE THINK OF AS ONLY ALMOST CHRISTIANS? 1. The child of pious parents, surrounded by gracious influences, led to the house of God, the child of many prayers, growing up to manhood or womanhood, yet not wholly Christ's to-day. 2. The regular attendant at Christian services; often moved to tears, and, it may be, to some passing resolves; but emotions pass, decision is delayed, and they are only almost Christians yet. 3. There may even be aged people trembling down to life's close, who, having put off religious decision again and again, seem now unable to make the effort, and are in peril of dying only almost Christians. 4. There are parents who have converted children, but are themselves the old side of the border-land, yet in "trespasses and sins." 5. There are those who have been aroused to religious anxiety, but whose experience, varying for years, has never yet risen to full surrender. Each of these classes may be described with precise adaptation to the congregation addressed.

II. WHAT REASONS CAN BE FOUND FOR SO MANY REMAINING ONLY ALMOST CHRISTIANS? In the case of Agrippa the message seemed novel and strange, and there seemed excuse for requiring time to think it over. In our case the message may seem old and familiar, and it may have lost its awakening and persuading power. Sometimes the hindrance is: 1. *Intellectual*. It may be some perplexity or difficulty in relation to Christian doctrine. Or it may be the influence of the intellectual tone of the society in which a man mingles. 2. Or the hindrance may be *lack of sufficient motive*: especially an inadequate impression of the evil and peril of sin. To use a figure, the boat lies rocking just outside the harbour bar, and there is not wave enough to lift it over. Therefore must the true preacher find motive and persuasion, urging, in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled unto God." 3. But the chief hindrances are *moral*. It was Agrippa's self-indulgent and immoral life which really turned the shafts aside. The pride of self stands in our way. Decision for Christ involves surrender—a giving up of that "self-reliance" which is so dear to flesh and blood. Illustrate from the story of the young rich ruler; and recall our Lord's teachings about the "strait gate and the narrow way." This may be the reason why we are not "altogether" Christians. There is a cable holding under the water somewhere, and the ship cannot float out free into the ocean of God. Illustrate some cables. The last to yield is usually *feeling*; we wait for feeling, and, waiting, let the golden hours of opportunity slip by.

III. WHAT REALLY IS IT TO BE ONLY ALMOST PERSUADED? See it in the estimate we form of Agrippa's character. He is utterly weak and ignoble. We admire the confessor and the martyr; we scorn the hesitating and indecisive—such as Reuben, "unstable as water." The people at Athens very properly ordained that every one should be fined who would take neither side in politics. It is a condition which dishonours God more than open rebellion, because it assumes that there really are some considerations to be set against his claims, some reasons why we should *not* love and serve him. And such indecision effectually shuts us out from the benefits of the gospel provision. The "almost Christian" has (1) no sense of pardoned sin; (2) no joy of peace with God; (3) no strength from the consciously present Saviour; (4) no title to the everlasting heritage. Impress that in religious matters there really is no border-land. Illustrate by the story of the wreck of the *Royal Charter*. The fore part ledged on a rock, the back part, flapped by the waves, broke away and sank in deep water with all that were in it. Just at the moment of parting a young man stood on the hinder part, and made a leap for dear life. He was saved, for he could decide and act. Then plead, as St. Paul pleaded, that, whether by little persuasion or by much, men would end their state of indecision, and become altogether Christ's.—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

Ver. 1.—*For for into, A.V.; to a centurion named Julius of the Augustan band for unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus'*

*band, A.V.* That we should sail. Observe the "we," denoting that Luke was of the party. Connecting it with the "we" of ch. xxi. 17, the inference is obvious that Luke was with Paul through the

whole of these two eventful years, and that it is to this presence that we owe the detailed circumstantial narrative of ch. **xxi.**—**xxviii.**, as well as, perhaps, the composition of St. Luke's Gospel, for which the two years at Cæsarea afforded an admirable opportunity. The Augustan band; or, *cohort* (σπεῖρα); as ch. **x.** 1 (where see note). This σπεῖρα Σεβαστή, *cohors Augusta*, was probably one of the five cohorts stationed at Cæsarea, consisting of auxiliary troops (though Alford does not think so). Its name "Augustan" was given, after the analogy of the Augustan legion, just as there was an "Italian band" as well as two or three "Italian legions." It has been conjectured (Kuinoel, *in loc.*), indeed, that the name may rather be taken from Sebaste, Samaria, as consisting of Samaritans, seeing that Josephus ('Bell. Jud.' ii. **xii.** 5) actually mentions a troop of cavalry (καλουμένην Σεβαστηνῶν) called the troop of Sebaste. But the Greek name is Σεβαστηνῶν, not Σεβαστή, which latter designation is not supported by any similar example (Meyer).

Ver. 2.—*Embarking in for entering into, A.V.; which was about to sail unto the places on the coasts of Asia, we put to sea for we launched, meaning to sail by the coast of Asia, A.V. and T.R.; Aristarchus for one Aristarchus, A.V. Adramyttium (now Adramyti, where ships are still built), on the north-western coast of Asia Minor, south of Troas, on the gulf opposite which lies the island of Lesbos, was a place of considerable trade, situated on the great Roman road which connected the Hellespont with Ephesus and Miletus. Which was about to sail; μέλλοντι (not μέλλοντες, as in the T.R.), describing the ship as a coasting-vessel, trading between Adramyttium and other ports on the coast of Asia. She was now on her homeward voyage. Aristarchus. He is first mentioned in ch. **xix.** 29, as a Macedonian, and one of Paul's companions at Ephesus, probably, therefore, the fruit of his first visit to Thessalonica. We find him again with St. Paul on his last journey from Corinth to Asia (ch. **xx.** 4), and we gather from the present notice of him that he kept with him till he arrived at Jerusalem, and followed him to Cæsarea. It would appear at first sight, from Col. **iv.** 10, that he not only stayed with St. Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Rome, but was his "fellow-prisoner," if at least the word συναχμαλώτης μου is to be taken literally. This, however, is very doubtful, because in the Epistle to the Romans (**xvi.** 7) St. Paul calls Andronicus and Junius his "fellow-prisoners," though he was not then in prison himself; and also because, in the Epistle to Philemon (**23, 24**), he gives this epithet to Epaphras, with the addition ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ("my fellow-prisoner in*

Christ Jesus"), and does not give it to Aristarchus, who is named in the same sentence as his συνεργός (see Bishop Lightfoot, on Col. **iv.** 10, and Bishop Ellicott, on *ibid.*). If συναχμαλώτης is to be taken of a bodily captivity, nothing is known of the occasion which gave rise to it in the case of any of the persons to whom it is applied.

Ver. 3.—*Treated Paul kindly for courteously entreated Paul, A.V.; leave for liberty, A.V.; and refresh for to refresh, A.V. We touched; κατήχθημεν (as Luke v. 11; ch. **xxi.** 3; **xxviii.** 12) of coming from the sea to land, contrasted with ἀνέχθημεν in vers. 2 and 4 (ἀναχθέντες) of going out to sea (as Luke **viii.** 22; ch. **xiii.** 13; **xvi.** 11; **xviii.** 21; **xxi.** 1, 2; and frequently in this chapter). At Sidon; where doubtless there were disciples, as well as at Tyre (ch. **xxi.** 4), though there is no special mention of such. Paul was glad to have an opportunity of visiting them while the ship was stopping there to unload, and set down and take up passengers; and Julius, perhaps by the orders of Festus and Agrippa, and also from the influence Paul's character and conduct had on him (comp. Dan. **i.** 9), courteously gave him leave to land, probably accompanied by a soldier. And refresh himself; literally, *to meet with care*. Ἐπιμελεία occurs only here in the New Testament, but is found in 1 Macc. **xvi.** 14; 2 Macc. **xi.** 23, and is frequent in Xenophon and other classical writers, by whom it is used with τυχεῖν, as here. Luke also uses the verb ἐπιμελόμαι (Luke **x.** 34, 35); and ἐπιμελῶς (Luke **xv.** 8). It is in very common use among medical writers for the care and attention required by the sick. It is very probable that St. Paul was suffering from his long confinement at Cæsarea, and that the ἐπιμελεία here mentioned has reference to his invalid state.*

Ver. 4.—*Putting to sea (ἀναχθέντες, see ver. 3, note) for when we had launched, A.V.; under the lee of for under, A.V. We sailed under the lee of; ὑπεπλεύσαμεν, only here and ver. 7. A nautical term, very rarely met with. The winds were contrary. The wind apparently was westerly, the prevalent wind at that season of the year. Smith ('Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul') quotes Admiral De Saumarez as writing from near Cyprus, "The westerly winds invariably prevail at this season;" and M. De Pages, a French navigator, as saying, "The winds from the west which prevail in these places (Cyprus) forced us to run to the north." This is exactly what the ship in which Paul sailed did. Instead of going in a westerly direction, and leaving Cyprus on her right, she turned due north, having Cyprus on her left. It was now late in August (Farrar, p. 363).*



Ver. 5.—*Across for over, A.V.; which is off for of, A.V.* (τὸ κατὰ τὴν Κιλικίαν, κ.τ.λ.). Across the sea. When they got under the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, they found the northerly wind, as M. De Pages did, and that enabled them to take a westerly course to Myra, a seaport in Lycia. The modern Turkish name of Myra is *Dembre*. (For an account and drawings of the wonderful rock-tombs of Myra, see Fellows's 'Lycia,' ch. ix.)

Ver. 6.—*For for into, A.V.* He put us therein; ἐνεβίβασεν, only here in the New Testament, and once in the LXX. (Prov. iv. 11). It is a nautical term for embarking men on board ship (Thucydides. Xenophon, Lucian, etc.), and is also used by medical writers for "placing patients in a bath." The corn-vessel (*navis frumentaria*) from Alexandria to Italy may very probably have been driven out of its direct course by the same contrary winds which forced St. Paul to sail under Cyprus (see Howson, vol. ii. p. 325, note 5), or commercial objects may have brought it to Lycia, to carry Asiatic merchandize to Rome, in addition to its cargo of Egyptian wheat—possibly "timber from the woody mountains of Lycia" (Lewin, vol. ii. p. 188, note).

Ver. 7.—*Were come with difficulty for scarce were come, A.V.; further suffering for suffering, A.V.; under the lee of for under, A.V.* Had sailed slowly (βραδυπλοούμετες, only here). They were evidently sailing near the wind, and would have to tack frequently. They made in many days no more progress (some hundred and thirty miles) than they would have made in twenty-four hours with a favourable wind. With difficulty (μόλις) they could only just manage to do it, the wind not suffering them (μὴ προσέωντος, here only). When they had with great difficulty got as far as over against Onidus, on the coast of Caria, the north wind which caught them made it impossible to go further north. Accordingly they struck nearly due south, and bore down upon Crete, and passing Cape Salmone, its eastern extremity, they came along the southern side of the island.

Ver. 8.—*With difficulty coasting along it for hardly passing it, A.V.; we came for came, A.V.; a certain place called for a place which is called, A.V.; Fair for the Fair, A.V.* With difficulty coasting along it; παραλεγόμε-αι, only here and ver. 13. It is a nautical phrase, meaning to sail alongside of the coast. In Latin *legere* has the same meaning. The difficulty arose from their being under the lee of the island, which sheltered them from the north-west wind, but left them without any motive power. However, they managed to get as far as Fair Havens, where they anchored in the roadstead so called,

near to an obscure and otherwise unknown town called *Lasea*, possibly the same as *Lasos*, mentioned by Pliny as one of the inland cities of Crete ('Nat. Hist.,' iv. xii. 20), or as *Elæa* (*ibid.*).

Ver. 9.—*And for now, A.V.; the voyage for when sailing, A.V.; gone by for past, A.V.* Much time (ικανὸν χρόνον διαγενομένου). The word *ikanós* is very frequently used by St. Luke, both in the Gospel and the Acts, for "much," "many," or "long," but the exact quantity of time, or words, or people, etc., indicated is of course relative to what might reasonably be expected in each case. Judas of Galilee (ch. v. 37) drew "much" people after him; the Jews at Damascus conspired to kill Saul after "many" days were fulfilled (ch. ix. 23); Paul and Barnabas abode "long time" at Iconium (ch. xiv. 3); Paul talked a "long" while at Troas (ch. xx. 3); and they sailed slowly off the coast of Asia "many" days (ver. 7); the length, i.e. the "sufficiency" (ικανότης) must depend in each case upon the standard by which it is measured. Here "much time," measured by the common experience of sailing-vessels waiting for a favourable wind, may mean one or two weeks. It is more natural to apply the phrase to the time of their detention at Fair Havens, than, as Meyer and others do, to the time that elapsed since they sailed from *Cæsarea*. The voyage was now dangerous (τοῦ πλοῦς, a late form for the older πλοῦ). *Dangerous*; ἐπισφαλούς, only here in the New Testament, and in Wisd. ix. 14; also occasionally in classical authors, but very frequently in medical writers. The *Fast*. The great Jewish fast on the Day of Atonement, in the month Tisri, which fell this year on September 24 (Lewin and Farrar), probably while they were at Fair Havens. The Jews considered navigation unsafe between the Feast of Tabernacles (five days after the Day of Atonement) and the Feast of Pentecost (Lewin, vol. ii. p. 192, note). It became, therefore, a very serious question what they were to do. Fair Havens was an inconvenient anchorage for the winter, and not near any large town. On the other hand, if they passed beyond the shelter of Cape Matala, which lay a few miles to the east, and where the coast of Crete suddenly trends due north, they would be exposed to the violence of the Eterian westerly wind. They called St. Paul into their counsels. Admonished them; παρήγει, only here and ver. 22. In classical Greek used especially of advice given by a speaker in a public speech. In medical writers it expresses the advice given by a physician to his patient.

Ver. 10.—*The for this, A.V.; injury for hurt, A.V.; loss for damage, A.V.; the ship for ship, A.V.* Sirs, I perceive, etc. St.

Paul's opinion and reasons are evidently not fully given; only the result, that he strongly advised against the course to which they were inclined, and foretold disaster as likely to ensue from it. *Iperceivē* (θεωρῶ), as John iv. 19; xii. 19; ch. xvii. 22. In all these places something actually seen or heard leads to the inference or conclusion stated. So here the angry state of the weather and of the sea—perhaps they had walked as far as Cape Matala, and seen the rough waves—convinced him of the rashness of the enterprise contemplated. Injury (ὑβρεως, and at ver. 21); literally, *violence, rough usage*—properly of persons to persons (as 2 Cor. xii. 10), but metaphorically here transferred to inanimate objects. Compare the use of ὑβρίζω (Matt. xxiii. 6; Luke xviii. 32; ch. xiv. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 2), and the phrases ναυσίστονον ὑβριν (Pindar), θαλάττης ὑβριν (Anthol.), ὁμβρῶν ὑβρις (Josephus), quoted in Kuinoel and Meyer. Meyer's explanation of ὑβρις, as meaning "presumption" or "temerity" on the part of the navigators, is quite inadmissible, especially in view of ver. 21. Also of our lives. Observe the thorough honesty of the historian who thus records the words of the apostle, though they were not justified by the event (vers. 22, 24).

Ver. 11.—*But for nevertheless, A.V.; gave more heed to for believed, A.V.; to the owner for the owner, A.V.; than to for more than, A.V.* The master (κυβερνήτης), in the sense of "a commander of a trading-ship" (Johnson's 'Dictionary'); i.e. the navigator and helmsman, in Latin *magister navis*. The owner (ναύκληρος). The owner, no doubt, of the cargo as well as of the ship itself: ὁ δεσπότης τοῦ πλοίου (Hesych.); οἱ ναῦς κεκτημένοι (Ammonius). The κυβερνήτης and the ναύκληρος are often mentioned together; e.g. in Plutarch, Artemidorus, quoted by Alford, Kuinoel, etc.

Ver. 12.—*Put to sea from thence for depart thence also, A.V. and T.R.; could reach Phenix for might attain to Phenice, A.V.; winter there for there to winter, A.V.; a haven for an haven, A.V.; looking north-east and south-east for and lieth toward the south-west and north-west, A.V.* Not commodious; ἀνευθέτου (not well placed, or disposed), only here. But the simple εἶθετος is used twice by St. Luke (ix. 62; xiv. 35), in the sense of "fit" (also Heb. vi. 7), and is of frequent use in medical writers, for "convenient," "well adapted to," and the like. To put to sea (αναχθῆναι); see ver. 3, note. Reach; καταντῆσαι, only in the Acts (frequently) and in St. Paul's Epistles. It is generally, if not always, used of coming from the higher to the lower place, and from the sea to the land (see ch. xvi. 1; xviii. 19, 24; xx. 15; xxi. 7; xxviii. 13, etc.). Phenix. It is

variously written *Phoenicus, Phenice, and Phenix*; and probably derived its name from the palm tree, (φαινίξ), which is indigenous in Crete. It is identified with almost certainty with the modern *Lutro* or *Loutro*, which is both "an admirable harbour," situated exactly where Phenice ought to be, and further by its proximity to a village called *Aradhene*, and another called *Anopolis*, shown to be the same as Phenix, or Phenice, which is described in ancient writers (Hierocles and Stephanus of Byzantium) as identical with or close to *Aradhena* and *Anopolis* (the upper city). Winter; παραχειμάσαι, so too ch. xxviii. 11; 1 Cor. xvi. 6; Titus iii. 12, and παραχειμασία in this verse. It is found also in classical writers. Looking north-east and south-east. The margin of the R.V. has "Greek, down the south-west wind, and down the north-west." This phrase has caused considerable perplexity to commentators. To say, as a recommendation of a harbour for winter quarters, that it lies or looks toward the south-west and north-west, and consequently is exposed to the most furious winter storms, is obviously impossible. If Phenix was open to the south-west and the north-west, it would not be as commodious a place to winter in as Fair Havens which was sheltered by Cape Matala. Two methods, therefore, have been adopted of explaining the phrase so as to make it give a reasonable sense. One, that adopted by Dean Howson and Bishop Wordsworth, viz. that it looks south-west and north-west, from the point of view of the sailor, or any one approaching it from the sea, the object upon which it looks being the land which locks it in and shelters it. The other is that supported by Alford, and adopted by the R.V., and rests upon the observation that λίβς and χῶρος are not points of the compass, but the names of the south-west and north-west winds, and that to look down (κατά) a wind is the same as looking down a stream. If the harbour looks down the south-west wind it looks toward the north-east, and if it looks down the north-west wind it looks toward the south-east. Its open side would be from north-east to south-east, it would be entirely sheltered on the south-west and north-west side. This is the explanation adopted also by Dean Plumptre. *The south-west wind*; λίψ, only here in the New Testament, but frequent in classical Greek and in the LXX. (see Ps. lxxviii [lxxxii., Septuagint] 26). As a point of the compass, it is the rendering of נֶבֶךְ (Gen. xiii. 14, etc.), of חֶקֶן (Numb. ii. 10, etc.), of קָרוֹם (Deut. xxxiii. 23). *The north-west wind*; χῶρος (the Latin *Caurus* or *Corus*), only here in the New Testament, and not found in Greek writers.

Ver. 13.—*They weighed anchor and for*

loosing thence, they, A.V.; along Crete, close in shore for close by Crete, A.V. Blew softly; ὑπνεύσαντος, only here in the New Testament, and not found elsewhere. Supposing that they had obtained their purpose. A south wind would be quite favourable for sailing east or east by north, from Fair Havens to Phoenix. They not unreasonably, therefore, thought they could effect their purpose of wintering at Phoenix. And so they at once weighed anchor; ἄραντες, without an objective case following, "having lifted up," understand τὰς ἀγκύρας, as in Julius Pollux, quoted by Smith. It was the nautical phrase. Sailed along (παρελέγοντο); see ver. 8, note. Close in shore (ἄσπον, comparative of ἄγχι, nearer, meaning "very near"). For the earlier part of their voyage they would be obliged to keep very near the shore, to enable them to weather Cape Matala, which lay a little to the south of west from Fair Havens. Some take ἄσπον as the name of a town on the coast, but the grammar of the sentence makes this impossible.

Ver. 14.—*After no long time for not long after, A.V.; beat down from for arose against, A.V.; which is called Euraquilo for called Euroclydon, A.V. and T.R.* There beat down from it (ἔβαλε κατ' αὐτῆς). The meaning of this somewhat difficult phrase clearly is that given by Alford and Howson, and, on second thoughts, by Smith, viz. that a violent squall from the north-east beat down the heights and through the valleys of the island, becoming more violent when they had passed Cape Matala, and compelled them to alter their course, and run south-west before the wind towards the island of Claudia; ἔβαλεν in a neuter sense, "struck," or "beat," or "fell," as in Homer (see Liddell and Scott). Κατ' αὐτῆς. Farrar thinks it "certain" that the right rendering is "against her," viz. the ship, because ἔβαλεν could not be used with nothing to follow it, i.e. he thinks you must say ἔβαλεν κατὰ something. But as πλοῖον is the word used for the ship, not ναῦς, it seems very difficult to suppose that Luke could say αὐτῆς, and not αὐτοῦ. It is better, therefore, to refer αὐτῆς to Κρήτη, and either to understand it "down it," like κατ' Οὐλύμπιοις καρήναν, "down the heights of Olympus;" κατὰ πέτρης, "down the rock," etc., or simply "against it," as in the A.V., which obviates Dr. Farrar's objection. If taken in the sense of "down," there is the same idea of a squall "rushing down" from the hills into the lake, in Luke viii. 23; and again in ver. 33 of the same chapter St. Luke tells us how the swine rushed κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ, "down the steep," into the lake. A tempestuous wind; ἄνεμος τυφωνικός, only here, and not found in Greek writers; but

the substantive τυφός, τυφῶνος, is common for a "furious storm" or "whirlwind." Euraquilo. Compounded—after the analogy of *Euronotus*, the south-east wind—of *Eurus*, the east wind, and *Aquilo*, the north wind, both Latin words (like *Corus*, in ver. 12), though Eurus is also Greek. This reading of the R.T. is supported by the Vulgate, and by "Lachmann, Bornemann, Ewald, J. Smith, Hackett, Bentley, Olshausen, after Erasmus, Grotius, Mill, Bengel, and others" (Meyer), and by Wordsworth, Alford, Liddell and Scott, Farrar. On the other hand, Meyer, Tischendorf, Dean Howson, and others support the reading of the T.R. *Εὐροκλύδων*, and Lewin is doubtful. The derivation of *Euroclydon* would be from *Eûros*, and *κλύδων*, a wave. Whatever its name was, it must have been a north-easter. Ps. cvii. 25 naturally arises to one's remembrance, with its fine description of a storm at sea.

Ver. 15.—*Face the wind for bear up into the wind, A.V.; gave way to it, and were driven for let her drive, A.V.* Was caught; συναρπασθέντος, only here in this sense of being caught and carried away by the gale, but used in three other places by St. Luke (and only by him), viz. Luke viii. 29; ch. vi. 12; xix. 29. It is found more than once in the LXX., and is common in classical Greek. Sophocles uses it of a storm which carries everything away, Πάντα συναρπάσας, θέλλ' ὅπως ('Elect,' 1150). Face; ἀντοφθαλμεῖν, only here in the New Testament; but in Polybius and elsewhere it is said of looking any one in the face with defiance. And so Wisd. xii. 14; Eccles. xix. 5 (Complut. Edit.), ἀντοφθαλμῶν ἡδοναίς, "resist-eth pleasures," A.V. Compare the phrase, "looked one another in the face" (2 Kings xiv. 8, 11, ὤφθησαν προσώποις). Hence here it means simply "resist," or "stand against," or, as well rendered in the R.V., "face." Gave way to it, etc.; ἐπιδόντες ἐφερόμεθα, a rather obscure phrase, but best explained "giving her" (the ship) to the wind, "we were carried" rapidly before it. Ἐπιδίδωμι is to give, to give up, to give into any one's hand (Luke iv. 17; ch. xv. 30). ἐπιδόντες is opposed to ἀντοφθαλμεῖν, giving up to, abandoning her to, as opposed to resisting. Ἐφερόμεθα, we were hurried along before the wind, without will or choice of our own (as ver. 17). Common in Homer and other classical writers, for being borne along by wind, or waves, or storm, etc. (For the application of φέρομα in the middle voice to a wind, see ch. ii. 2.)

Ver. 16.—*Under the lee of for under, A.V.; small for certain, A.V. (νήσιον); called Cauda for which is called Claudia, A.V. and T.R.; were able, with difficulty, to secure for had much work to come by, A.V.*



**Running under the lee of;** ὑποδραμόντες, only here in the New Testament, but common in classical Greek for "running under" or "between." (For the use of ὑπό in compound in the sense of "under the lee of," see ver. 7.) Cauda, or *Caudos*, as it is called by Pomp. Mela (ii. 7) and Pliny ('Nat. Hist.,' iv. xii. 20), the modern *Gozzo*. Ptolemy (iii. 7) calls it *Claudus*. The manuscripts greatly vary. *Clauda*, or *Caula*, was about twenty-three miles south-west of Crete. With difficulty (μόλις, as in vers. 7, 8). To secure the boat. The boat was doubtless being towed astern. But in the violence of the storm, there was a danger every moment of her being parted from the ship by the snapping of the hawser, or by being broken by the waves, and it was impossible to take her up. Under the lee of the little island, however, the sea was somewhat quieter; and so after greater efforts they secured the boat, and, as it is said in the next verse, "hoisted it up" on to the deck.

Ver. 17.—*And when they had hoisted it up for which when they had taken up, A.V.; be cast upon the Syrtis for fall into the quicksands, A.V.; they lowered the gear for strake sail, A.V.* Helps; βοηθείαι, in the New Testament only here and Heb. iv. 16; but frequent in medical language, for "band-ages," "ligaments," "muscles," and all kinds of supports both artificial and natural, and generally to medical aid. Undergirding the ship; ὑποζωννόντες, only here in the Bible; but found, as well as its derivative ὑπόζωμα, in classical Greek, in the same sense as it has here. In medical language it is used of certain membranes which "undergird" and so strengthen and hold together certain parts of the human body, and specially was applied to the πλευρά. As regards the nautical sense in which St. Luke here uses the word, Dean Howson, in his excellent chapter (xxiii.) on the 'Navigation and Ships of the Ancients,' writes as follows:—"In consequence of the extreme danger to which the ships of the ancients were exposed from leaking, it was customary to take to sea, as part of their ordinary gear, ὑποζώματα, undergirders, which were simply ropes for passing round the hull of the ship, and thus preventing the planks from starting;" and he adds in a note that "within the last twenty years (in 1837) marble tables had been dug up in the Piræus, containing a list of Athenian ships and an inventory of their tackle, and that they all carried, as part of their "hanging gear," ὑποζώματα. Another great ship described by Athenæus carried twelve such. The operation of undergirding is still occasionally performed, and is called by seamen "frapping." The German word is *umgürten* (Howson). Among other recent examples

(Howson, p. 33) the *Albion* was frapped with iron chains after the battle of Navarino. Cast upon the Syrtis. The wind was driving them straight toward the Syrtis Major, "the Goodwin Sands of the Mediterranean" (Farrar), and another twenty-four hours of such a gale might bring them there. The Syrtis Major was a wide gulf off the northern coast of Africa, now the Gulf of Sidra, lying between Tunis and Tripoli, considered very dangerous from its rocks and shoals. *Be cast upon* (ἐκπέσωσι). The verb ἐκπίπτειν is the classical word (Homer, Herodotus, Euripides) for being driven or thrown ashore, and is used in this sense in vers. 26, 29 of this chapter, and in a slightly different sense in ver. 32. They lowered the gear (χαλδάρωντες τὸ σκεῦος). Σκεῦος is a very common word, variously rendered "goods," "stuff," "vessel," according to the material to which it is applied (Matt. xii. 29; Luke viii. 16; xvii. 31, etc.). In the LXX. it is used of agricultural implements (1 Sam. xiii. 20, 21), of weapons of hunting (Gen. xxvii. 37), of household furniture (Gen. xxxi. 37), weapons of war (Deut. i. 41), instruments of music (2 Chron. v. 13). This is the only passage in the Bible where it is used in its technical sense as a nautical term. In classical Greek, when applied generally to ships, it means the whole tackling, sails, ropes, yards, stores, engines, etc. The meaning, of course, is narrowed when applied to some particular part of the ship. Here, on the whole, it seems to mean the "great yard," or, if that had been already lowered, the heavy "head-gear," ropes, pulleys, and the like, which, under the circumstances, would contribute to make the ship roll and be unsteady. The word rendered "lowered" is χάλασαι. It is rendered "let down" in Mark ii. 4; Luke v. 4, 5; ch. ix. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 33; and ver. 30 of this chapter (A.V.). In the R.V. it is sometimes rendered "let down" and sometimes "lowered." In the LXX. it is used in the sense of "spreading" a sail (Isa. xxxiii. 23), which would be equivalent to "let down," if the sails were reefed at the top of the mast; and of "letting down" (Jer. xxxviii. 6). The R.V., therefore, is correct. The object of what they did was to enable the ship to go as near the wind as possible, and with as little straining and rolling as possible. The operation is called by sailors "lying to." Were driven (see ver. 15).

Ver. 18.—*As we laboured exceedingly for being exceedingly tossed, A.V.; the storm for a tempest, A.V.; began to throw the freight overboard for lightened the ship, A.V.* Laboured; χεῖμαζομένων, only here in the New Testament; but used by Plato, Thucydides, Diodorus Siculus, Josephus, and others, and especially by medical

writers. It is the passive voice, and this is best expressed by the A.V. "tossed." They began to throw, etc. The phrase ἐκβολὴν ἐποιούντο is one of the technical phrases for taking a cargo out of a ship, given by Julius Pollux; ἐκβολὴν ποιήσασθαι τῶν φορτίων (Alford, from Smith). It is also the phrase of the LXX. in Jonah i. 5, Ἐκβολὴν ἐποίησαντο τῶν σκευῶν τῶν ἐν τῷ πλοῷ. *They began to express the imperfect.* It is inferred from this, and the subsequent statement (ver. 19) as to throwing overboard the tackling of the ship, that, in spite of the undergirding, the ship was leaking, and therefore heavy with water, and in danger of going down (comp. Jonah i. 5). The freight here mentioned may have been heavy packages of merchandise other than the main cargo of wheat (see ver. 6, note).

Ver. 19.—*They for we, A.V. and T.R.; their for our, A.V.* The third day after leaving Claudia. The leak doubtless continued, and there was more water in the ship. With their (or, our) own hands; αὐτόχειρες, only here in the Bible, but frequent in classical Greek. The word seems to mark that the sacrifice was very great, implying a very pressing danger. The tackling (τὴν σκευήν). There is great difference of opinion as to what the σκευή means here. Smith thinks the main spar is meant, "the huge mainyard," and Farrar adopts his view, which he thinks is strengthened by the use of the aorist ἐρρίψαμεν (for he adopts the T.R.), implying one single act, and showing, by the use of the first person, that it was the act of the whole crew united. Alford thinks that it means all the furniture, beds, and movables of all kinds, and so Wordsworth and Meyer. Wetstein explains it of the passengers' baggage. Howson thinks it unlikely they would have thrown away a great spar which would have supported twenty or thirty men in the water in the event of the ship foundering. Schleusner renders it "apparatus quo navis erat instructa." Σκευή is not used elsewhere in the New Testament, and it is difficult to speak decisively. But the addition of τοῦ πλοίου, and the general use of σκευή in classical Greek favours the interpretation "the ship's furniture" ("meubles et ustensiles," Renan).

Ver. 20.—*Shone upon us for many days for in many days appeared, A.V.; now for then, A.V.* Neither sun nor stars, etc. This is mentioned, not only as a feature of the severity and length of the easterly gale (for the wind had shifted two or three points to the east), but specially because in the navigation of that time, before the invention of the compass, the sun, moon, and stars were the only things they had to steer by,

or by which they could know the direction in which they were drifting. Shone upon us (ἐπιφαίνοντων); *showed themselves; i.e. "appeared,"* as in the A.V., which is the best rendering (comp. ἐπιφάνεια, the appearance, or Epiphany). Now. Λοιπόν, τὸ λοιπόν, and τοῦ λοιποῦ are used adverbially both in the New Testament and in classical Greek. It is sometimes rendered "now," i.e. for the time that remains; and sometimes "henceforth;" sometimes "finally" (Mark xiv. 41; 2 Tim. iv. 8; 2 Cor. xiii. 11, etc.). It seems that sometimes χρόνον is to be understood, and sometimes that it means "as for what remaineth" to be said or done (comp. the French *du reste* or *au reste*).

Ver. 21.—*And when they had been long without food for but after long abstinence, A.V. and T.R.; then Paul for Paul, A.V.; set sail for loosed, A.V.; and gotten for to have gained, A.V.; injury for harm, A.V.* Long without food (πολλῆς ἀστίας ὑπαρχούσης). Ἀστία is only found here in the Bible; but it was the common medical term for loss of the appetite, and such is the most natural rendering here. There is nothing about "long abstinence" in the text, nor does the verb ὑπαρχούσης admit of being translated "when they had been." It describes a present condition. The literal rendering is, *when there was a great (or, general) loss of appetite among the crew.* The terror, the discomfort, the sea-sickness, the constant pressure of danger and labour, the difficulty of cooking, the unpalatableness of the food, combined to take away relish of their food, and they were becoming weak for want of nourishment. Have gotten (κερδήσαι). Schleusner, Bengel, Meyer, Alford, and the 'Speaker's Commentary' explain this as equivalent to "have avoided," or "have escaped," and quote Josephus ('Ant. Jud.,' ii. iii. 2), Τὸ μὴ θῆναι τὰς χεῖρας κερδαίνειν, "To avoid staining their hands;" and 'Bell. Jud.,' ii. xvi. 4 (towards the close of Agrippa's speech), Τῆς ἡττης ὄνειδος κερδήσετε, "You will gain (i.e. avoid) the disgrace of defeat," like the use in Latin of *lucifacere*. But it is simpler on the whole to understand it in the sense of "getting" as the fruit of your own conduct. We should say in English, "What have you gained by this. Nothing but loss and shame." Compare too the phrase τὰ ὀνόματα τῆς ἀμαρτίας θάνατος (Rom. vi. 23). So Liddell and Scott give us one use of κερδαίνειν, to gain a loss, i.e. reap disadvantage, and quote from Euripides, 'Hecuba,' l. 518 (516, Scholefield), δικάδ δάκρυα κερδᾶναι, "to gain double weeping." Injury (ὑβριν); see ver. 10, note. In the A.V. "to have gained" observe the same idiom as in ver. 10, "and there 'o winter."

Ver. 22.—*Life for any man's life, A.V.; but only for but, A.V.* I exhort you to be

of good cheer. Mr. Hobart remarks that this "has all the look of a doctor's expression, *παραινέιν* being the term for a physician giving his advice," and "*εὐθυμος, εὐθυμείν*, and *εὐθυμω* being used in medical language in reference to the sick keeping up their spirits, as opposed to *ἀθυμία* and *δυσθυμία*" (see ver. 25, note). Loss; *ἀποβολή*, only here and Rom. xi. 15; but found in Plato, Aristotle, Josephus, Plutarch, etc. Mark how the message of mercy and love follows the chastisement and its fruit of self-humiliation. In their prosperity and self-confidence they rejected Paul's word at Fair Havens; they listen to it at death's door.

Ver. 23.—*An angel of the God whose I am, whom also for the angel of God, whose I am, and whom*, A.V. and T.R. Observe Paul's open confession of God before the heathen crew.

Ver. 24.—*Stand for be brought*, A.V.; *granted for given*, A.V. *Stand*; *παρῆσθαι*, the proper word for standing before a judge; comp. Rom. xiv. 10, *πάντες παραστήσονται τῷ θύματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ*: and in the subscription to the Second Epistle to Timothy it is said that it was written "when Paul was brought before Nero the second time" (Greek, *ὅτε ἐκ δευτέρου παρέστη Παῦλος τῷ Καίσαρι*). God hath granted, etc. Doubtless in answer to his prayers. Compare the opposite statement in Ezek. xiv. 14, 16, 18, 20, "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered themselves;" and see also Gen. xviii. 26, 32. Paul's calm courage and kind words, added to the proof they had of his prescient wisdom, were well calculated to inspire the crew with a reverential trust in him, and to rekindle their extinguished hope.

Ver. 25.—*Even so for even*, A.V.; *hath been spoken unto me for was told me*, A.V. Be of good cheer; *εὐθυμεῖτε*, as ver. 22; elsewhere only Jas. v. 13, but we have *εὐθυμος* in ver. 36 and ch. xxiv. 10; common in classical Greek and in medical language (see ver. 22, note). Note how the servant of God has the light of hope and trust in the darkest night of danger and suffering (Ps. cxii. 4, 7; xli. 1—3). It shall be even so, etc. Compare for the lesson of faith in God's promise, Luke i. 45, "There shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." "Lord, increase our faith."

Ver. 26.—*We must be cast*, etc. (*ἐκπεσεῖν*, ver. 17, note). Here St. Paul speaks distinctly by revelation, probably what was told him by the angel. We can see the same purpose here as in all miracles and prophetic utterances, viz. to give God's credentials to his ambassador as speaking in his Name and by his authority (John xx. 31).

Ver. 27.—*To and fro for up and down*, A.V.; *the sea of Adria for Adria*, A.V.; *sailors for shipmen*, A.V.; *surmised for deemed*, A.V.; *were drawing for drew*, A.V. The fourteenth night, reckoned from their leaving Fair Havens (so vers. 18, 19). Driven to and fro (*διαφερομένων*); it is rather *carried across*, or *along*, from one end to the other. Sea of Adria. Adria, as in the A.V., is scarcely correct, as a translation of the Greek (though the Latins did call it *Adria*), because the nominative case in Greek is *ὁ Ἀδρίας*, sc. *κόλπος*, *Adrias*, the Adriatic Gulf. *Ἀδρία* is the name of the town near the mouth of the Po, which gave its name to the Adriatic. As regards the use of term *ὁ Ἀδρίας*, the Adriatic, it is used in two ways: sometimes strictly of the Gulf of Venice, the Adriatic; sometimes, chiefly in latter writers, in a much wider sense, of the whole sea between Greece and Italy, including Sicily. This last is its use here. So, too, Josephus says that he was wrecked *κατὰ μέσον τὸν Ἀδρίαν*, in the midst of the Adriatic, on his voyage from Casarea to Puteoli, and was picked up by a ship from Cyrene. This implies that he used the word "*Adria*" in the same sense as St. Luke does (see further the appendix v. and vi. in Smith's '*Voyage*,' etc.; Conybeare and Howson, p. 343, note, and p. 356; Lewin, vol. ii. p. 198, note; Farrar, vol. ii. p. 377, note; Renan, '*St. Paul*,' p. 552). Surmised that they were drawing near. Probably from hearing the waves breaking upon the Point of Koura, east of St. Paul's Bay. *ὑπὸν ὦ* is only found in the Acts (ch. xiii. 25; xxv. 18; and here); but it is used three or four times in the LXX. (Daniel, Job, Judith, Sirach), and is common in classical Greek in the sense of to "suspect," "conjecture," "guess at" anything (see *ὑπονόει*, 1 Tim. vi. 4). *Were drawing near*, etc.; literally, *that some country* (or, *land*) was drawing near to them. In like manner, the land is said *ἀναχωρεῖν*, to recede, as the vessel gets out to sea.

Ver. 28.—*They sounded for sounded*, A.V.; *found for found it*, A.V. (twice); *after a little space for when they had gone a little further*, A.V. After a little space (*βραχὺ διαστήσαντες*); literally, *having interposed a short interval of time or space* (comp. Luke xxii. 58, 59, *μετὰ βραχὺ, κ.τ.λ.*, and then follows *διαστάσης ὥστε ὥρας μίας* "after an interval of about an hour").

Ver. 29.—*And for then*, A.V.; *lest haply for lest*, A.V.; *be cast ashore on rocky ground for have fallen upon rocks*, A.V.; *let go for cast*, A.V.; *from for out of*, A.V. Cast ashore (see ver. 17, note). Rocky ground (*τραχεῖς τόπους*); Luke iii. 5. The region of Trachonitis was so called from the rocky nature of the country—*ἄκρη τραχεία*, a rocky shore. Four anchors. "*Naves quaternis*



anchoris destinabat ne fluctibus moveretur" (Cæsar, 'De Bell. Civ.,' i. 25). From the stern. Anchors are usually dropped from the bow, but under certain circumstances ships anchor from the stern. The British navy so anchored at the battles of the Nile, Algiers, and Copenhagen, and it is a common practice of the Levantine caïques at the present day; and an ancient picture of a ship (at Herculaneum) distinctly represents "hawse-holes aft to fit them for anchoring by the stern." They did so in the present case, to obviate the danger of the ship swinging round and getting into breakers, and also that she might be in the best position for running on to the beach as soon as daylight came.

Ver. 30.—*Sailors for shipmen, A.V.; seeking for about, A.V.; and had lowered for when they had let down, A.V.; lay out for have cast, A.V.; from for out of, A.V.* Had lowered (χαλδσαντες, see ver. 17, note). The sailors thought the only chance of safety was to get into the boat and run ashore on the beach. They pretended, therefore, that they wished to let down more anchors from the bow; and let down the boat, as if with that intention, being prepared to jump in and make for the shore, leaving the ship to be wrecked, with all on board her. What a contrast to the conduct of our English crews, who are always the last to quit a sinking vessel!

Ver. 31.—Paul said. It is remarkable what ascendancy Paul had gained during this terrible fortnight. He now penetrated in a moment the design of the selfish sailors, and, with his wonted decision, told the centurion, who was in command of the whole party (ver. 11), and who, it is likely, had his soldiers on deck to preserve order and discipline, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. The *υμεῖς* is emphatic, *you yourselves*.

Ver. 32.—*Cut away for cut off, A.V.* Fall off (ἐκπεσεῖν, vers. 17, note, 26, and 29). The action of the soldiers in cutting the rope and letting the boat loose was very prompt, but rather rash, as the boat might have been useful in landing those on board. But it showed their implicit confidence in Paul's word.

Ver. 33.—*Some food for meat, A.V.; wait and continue for have tarried and continued, A.V.* All; including the treacherous sailors whose plot he had just defeated. Having taken nothing; not meaning that they had literally been fourteen days without tasting food, which is impossible; but that they had no regular meals, only snatching a mouthful now and then in the midst of their incessant toil.

Ver. 34.—*Beseech for pray, A.V.; food for meat, A.V.; safety for health, A.V.;*

*a hair for an hair, A.V.; perish for fall, A.V. and T.R.* Take; here in the R.T. μεταλαβεῖν instead of προσλαβεῖν of the T.R. Your safety; or, *health*; i.e. for the preservation of your lives in the impending struggle. Not a hair perish; or, according to the T.R., *fall*. It is uncertain whether ἀπολείται (R.T.) or πεσέται (T.R.) is the right reading. The Hebrew proverb, as contained in 1 Sam. xiv. 45; 2 Sam. xiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 52, is, "fall to the earth" or "ground:" Εἰ πεσέται τριχός (or, ἀπὸ τῆς τριχός, or τῶν τριχῶν) τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν (LXX.). In Luke xxi. 18, it is Θρίξ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἀπολήται (comp. Luke xii. 7). Absolute and complete safety is meant. He still speaks as a prophet.

Ver. 35.—*Said this for thus spoken, A.V.; and had taken for he took, A.V.; he gave for and gave, A.V.; the presence of all for presence of them all, A.V.; he brake for when he had broken, A.V.; and began for he began, A.V.* Had taken bread, etc. The concurrence of the words λαβὼν ἔτρυν, ἡψχαρίστησε, κλάσας, which all occur in the institution of the Holy Eucharist (Luke xxii. 19), is certainly, as Bishop Wordsworth says, remarkable. But there is the same similarity of phrase (except that εὐλόγησε is used for ἡψχαρίστησε in the first passage) in Matt. xiv. 19 and xv. 36, and therefore the conclusion to be drawn is that St. Paul's action and words were the same as those of our Lord, as far as the breaking bread and giving thanks and eating, went, which were common to both occasions; but in the institution of the sacrament the words "This is my body" were additional, and represented an additional and sacramental truth. Observe, again, the devout confession of the living God in the presence of unbelieving men (vers. 23, 24).

Ver. 36.—*Themselves also took food for they also took some meat, A.V.* Of good cheer (εὐθυμοι); see above, vers. 22, 25, notes.

Ver. 37.—We were in all, etc. From the number of persons, two hundred and seventy-six, on board the ship it is calculated that she was of more than five hundred tons burden. The ship in which Josephus was wrecked on his way to Rome, under the procuratorship of Felix (κατὰ μέσον τὸν Ἀδρίαν), carried six hundred souls ('Life,' sect. 8). The ship of Alexandria described by Lucian is calculated to have been of above a thousand tons. The mention of the number brings before us a striking picture of so many persons at St. Paul's bidding, in the midst of so great a danger, taking a cheerful and leisurely meal together, in dependence upon a speedy deliverance promised to them in God's Name. It also adds another vivid touch to the

picture of the eye-witness of what he relates. Dean Plumptre well suggests that St. Luke very likely counted the crew on this occasion of their being all assembled together for the first time.

Ver. 38.—*Throwing out for and cast out*, A.V. They lightened the ship; ἐκούφισαν, only here in the New Testament; but it is the technical word for lightening a ship so as to keep her afloat. So in Polybius, i. 39, Ἐκρῖψαντες ἐκ τῶν πλοίων πάντα τὰ βάρη μόλις ἐκούφισαν τὰς ναῦς; and Jonah i. 5, "They cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them (ταῦ κουφισθῆναι ἀπ' αὐτῶν)" (see ver. 18, note). Κουφίσαι τὴν ναῦν is one of the technical expressions for taking cargo out of a ship, given by Julius Pollux (Smith). The wheat (τὸν σῖτον). There is a difference of opinion as to what St. Luke here means by τὸν σῖτον. Meyer and others think it was merely "the ship's provision," and that, considering the number of persons in the ship, and the little consumption during the last fortnight, the weight of what was left would be considerable. They add that the cargo had been already thrown overboard in ver. 18. Others, as Howson, following Smith and Penrose, Farrar, Lewin, and many older commentators, with more reason, understand "the wheat" to mean the ship's cargo from Alexandria to Rome; they think it had been impossible to get at it while the ship was drifting; and that, even had it been possible, it was the last thing they would have recourse to. But now, when it was impossible to save the ship, and the only chance of saving their lives was to run her on the beach, it was an absolute necessity to lighten the ship as much as possible. They therefore cast her freight of Alexandrian corn into the sea, and waited for daylight (see note to ver. 18).

Ver. 39.—*Perceived for discovered*, A.V.; *bay with a beach for creek with a shore*, A.V.; and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it for into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship, A.V. They knew not the land. It was seven miles from the harbour of Valetta, and a part of the island not likely to have been visited by the sailors, and presenting no marked features by which they would recognize it. A certain bay with a beach; αἰγιαλόν, a level pebbly or sandy beach (Matt. xiii. 2; ch. xxi. 5; and ver. 40), as opposed to ἄκρη, a high rugged coast (τρηχέια, ὄρη, etc., Homer). They took counsel whether they could drive, etc. The rendering of the A.V. is surely infinitely better than the B.V. The meaning of βουλευομαι, both in the New Testament and in classical Greek, is frequently and properly "to determine," "to resolve" or "purpose" (see ch.

v. 33; xv. 37, note; 2 Cor. i. 17; and Liddell and Scott's 'Lexicon'); and the order of the words here suits the rendering of the A.V. much better than that of the B.V., which would require καὶ ἐβουλευόντο, instead of εἰς ὃν, κ.τ.λ. The Revisionists seem to have been misled by the resemblance of Luke xiv. 31. Drive; ἐξῶσαι, the technical word for driving a ship ashore (Thucyd., ii. 10, etc.). It only occurs in the New Testament here, and in a different sense in ch. vii. 45. It is not uncommon in the LXX. as the rendering of דָּחַק and דָּחַק (see Deut. xiii. 3; 2 Sam. xiv. 13; Jer. xlix. [LXX., xxvi.] 36, etc.).

Ver. 40.—*Casting off for when they had taken up*, A.V.; *they left them in the sea for they committed themselves unto the sea*, A.V.; *at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders for and loosed the rudder bands*, A.V.; *hoisting for hoised*, A.V.; *foresail for mainsail*, A.V.; *for the beach for toward shore*, A.V. This verse, so obscure before, has been made intelligible by the masterly labours of Smith, of Jordan Hill. We will first explain the separate words. Casting off (περιελόντες). The verb περιαιρέω occurs in ver. 20; in 2 Cor. iii. 16; and in Heb. x. 11; and in all those passages is rendered "taken away." So also in the LXX., where it is of frequent use, it means "take away," "put away," "remove," and the like. In classical Greek it means to "take away," "take off," "strip off." Here, then, applied to the anchors which were firmly embedded in the very strong clay at the bottom of the sea off Koura Point, περιελόντες τὰς ἀγκύρας means "putting away" or "casting off" the anchors by cutting the cables which fastened them to the ship, and, as it follows, leaving them in the sea, or, more literally, *giving them up, dismissing them into the sea* (εἶων εἰς τῇ θάλασσῃ); comp. ch. v. 38. Loosing the bands of the rudders. "The ships of the Greeks and Romans, like those of the early Northmen were not steered by a single rudder, but by two paddle-rudders" (Howson, p. 310. See too an illustration from an ancient painting found at Herculaneum, in which the two paddle-rudders are very distinctly seen, at p. 346; and another illustration in Lewin, vol. ii. p. 204, showing the two rudders and the foresail). These paddle-rudders had been hoisted up and lashed, lest they should foul the anchors at the stern. But now, when the free use of them was absolutely necessary to steer the ship toward the beach, they unloosed the lashings, i.e. "the bands of the rudders," and at the same time they hoisted up the foresail. The foresail; τὸν ἄρτέμονα, a word found only here in this sense, but used in Vitruvius for a "pulley," and so explained in Ducange.

But *artimon* was till recently used in Venice and Genoa as the name of the large sail of a vessel. In the Middle Ages *artimonium* was the "foremast," *mât de proue*; but it was also used of the foresail, "*Velum navis breve, quod quia melius levare potest, in summo periculo extenditur*" (Ducange). They hoisted the foresail both to give them sufficient way to run on to the beach, and to give precision to their steering. (For a further account of the *ἄρτεμών*, or foresail, see Smith, of Jordan Hill.)

Ver. 41.—*But lighting upon for and falling into*, A.V.; *vessel for ship*, A.V.; *fore-ship for forepart*, A.V.; *struck for stuck fast*, A.V.; *stern for hinder part*, A.V.; *began to break up for was broken with*, A.V. Where two seas met; *τόπον διθάλασσον*, only here, and in Dion Chrysostomus. The explanation of this "place where two seas met" is as follows:—As the ship stood at anchor in the bay on the north-east side of the island, it would have the Koura Point (*Ras-el-Koura*) on its left, and on entering deeper into the bay westward, the little island of Salmonetta, or Selmoun, otherwise called Gzeier, would lie on its right, and would appear to be part of the island of Malta, from which it is separated by a narrow channel about a hundred yards in width. When, however, she was just coming upon the beach for which she was making, she would come opposite to this open channel, and the sea from the north would break upon her and meet the sea on the south side of the island, where the ship was. Here, then, they ran the vessel aground. *Ἐπώκειλαν*, or, according to the R.T., *ἐπέκειλαν*, is only found here in the Bible; but it is the regular word for running a ship aground, or ashore, in classical writers. *Ἐπικέλλω* has exactly the same meaning. The simple verbs *κέλλω* and *ὀκέλλω* are also both in use for running a ship to land. The foreship struck; *ἐπέσασσα*, here only in the Bible, but very common in classical Greek. Its meaning here is not very different from its frequent medical meaning of a disease "fixing itself" and "settling" in some particular part of the body. Remained unmovable. "A ship impelled by the force of a gale into a creek with a bottom such as that laid down in Admiral Smyth's chart of St. Paul's Bay, would strike a bottom of mud graduating into tenacious clay, into which the forepart would fix itself and be held fast, whilst the stern was exposed to the force of the waves" (Smith, p. 144). *Unmovable*; *ἀσάλευτος*, only here and Heb. xii. 28, in the Bible; but common in Greek writers in the sense of "firm," "unmovable." Began to break up (*ἐλύετο*, like *solvo* and *dissolvo* in Latin). The planks were loosened and disjointed

By the violence. The R.T. omits the words *τῶν κυμάτων*, and so has *βία* alone, somewhat like *ἔβρις* in ver. 21.

Ver. 42.—The soldiers' counsel, etc. The same stern sense of duty in the Roman soldier as moved the keeper of the jail at Philippî to destroy himself when he thought his prisoners had escaped (ch. xvi. 27). The prisoners; by which we learn, as also in ver. 1, that there were other prisoners beside Paul going to be tried before Cæsar at Rome (comp. Josephus's account ('Life,' sect. 3) of certain priests, friends of his, who were sent as prisoners to Rome, to be tried). Swim out; *ἐκκολυμβάω*, only here, but not uncommon in the same sense in classical Greek (see next verse). Escape; *διαφύγοι*, peculiar to St. Luke here, but it is the common medical word for a narrow escape from illness.

Ver. 43.—*Desiring for willing*, A.V.; *stayed for kept*, A.V.; *overboard, and get first to the land for first into the sea, and get to land*, A.V. To save Paul; *διασῶσαι*, and ver. 44 and ch. xxviii. 1, 4; a word of very frequent medical use, employed six times by St. Luke, but only twice elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt. xiv. 26; 1 Pet. iii. 20). Swim; *κολυμβάω*, here only in the Bible; though *κολυμβήθρα*, properly a swimming-bath, rendered "pool" in the A.V., occurs five times in St. John's Gospel. The verb means "to dive" rather than "to swim." Both the verb and the noun are used frequently in medical language for "swimming in a bath," and *ρίπτειν σεαυτὸν* (like *ἀποβρίπτειν* here) is the phrase for jumping into the bath.

Ver. 44.—*Planks for boards*, A.V.; *other things from for broken pieces of*, A.V.; *all escaped* (*διασωθῆναι*) *for escaped all*, A.V.; *the land for land*, A.V. Planks; *σανίδων*, only here and in the LXX. of 2 Kings xii. 9 (for the "lid" of the box) and Cant. viii. 9 (for "boards"); very common in Homer and other Greek writers, for "boards" and "planks" of all kinds. They all escaped. In exact fulfilment of Paul's prediction in ver. 22. And thus ended the eventful voyage of about four hundred and eighty miles (as laid down in the charts) from Clauda to the Point of Koura on the north coast of Malta. It is one of the striking proofs of the identity of Melita with Malta, that the rate at which it is calculated that a large ship laying to in a gale would drift in twenty-four hours, viz. thirty-six miles, multiplied by thirteen and a half (the number of days occupied by the voyage), gives four hundred and eighty-six miles as the whole distance.<sup>1</sup> Smith thinks that the coincidence between "the actual bear-

<sup>1</sup> 36 × 13½ = 486.



ing of St. Paul's Bay from Olanda, and the direction in which the ship must have driven," with the wind blowing in the

quarter we know it did, "is, if possible, still more striking" (pp. 127, 128).

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—17.—*The voyage.*** "The voyage of life" is an expression drawn from the common feeling of men that there is a close analogy between the course of a man's life through the world, from his birth to his grave, and the progress of a ship from port to port. The Christian metaphor of the ark of Christ's Church, tossed upon the waves of this troublesome world, yet finally reaching the land of everlasting life, is no less familiar to us. It may not be without instruction to note some of the points of resemblance in a Christian's life to the apostle's voyage as described in the narrative before us. First, there is in both a definite purpose. The ship is making for a particular port; the Christian is definitely seeking to attain the kingdom of heaven. But many a life would be far more useful, and far more consistent, if this purpose were more condensed. We are often too much distracted by the episodes in our life. The passing circumstances, the shifting situations, the immediate surroundings of the day, bound our horizon, and the intermediate seems to us as the final, or at least shuts the final out from view. The lesson is, keep steadily in view, in sunshine and in storm, under every variety of outward circumstance, the great end of the Christian life, to dwell with Christ in glory for ever, and bend your unrelaxing efforts to compass this end. Then, again, let us mark in the Christian life, as in the ship's voyage, the conditions of the enterprise. There is the fixed will and purpose, and the wisdom and skill and resolution of the man, on the one hand; but there are also the inevitable hindrances and obstacles, on the other. Changes and chances, vicissitudes and disappointments, obstacles and disturbances, arise unbidden, and often when we least expect them. The pleasant start, the cheering incidents which seemed full of promise for a prosperous voyage, are succeeded by dull delays and by tedious, disheartening, and disconcerting experiences. We have to deal with events of which we had not taken count. The sanguine hope of a rapid progress is succeeded by the tediousness of delay, and our own counsels are continually thwarted by the folly or incompetence of others of whom we cannot set ourselves free. By-and-by, when we think we see signs of improvement close at hand, things suddenly take a turn for the worse. All the elements of difficulty are multiplied a hundredfold; and our bark, whether freighted with earthly schemes or heavenly hopes, is in imminent danger of shipwreck. Happy is he who at such times lays fast hold of the promises of God, cleaves to the Lord Jesus with a steadfast faith, and perseveres to the end. In spite of delays, and in spite of dangers, he shall not be ashamed of his hope. Only let each alternation work its proper work, teaching patience and long-suffering, encouraging a life of simple faith, stimulating all the energies of the soul, stirring up to active exertion, engendering a calm and dauntless courage, and bringing out every resource of the mind according to the immediate need, and the storms and agitation of the voyage will in due time be exchanged for the peace and safety of the everlasting haven of glory in the presence of the Lord Jesus. Dear reader, be prepared for all; let nothing shake your faith or dim your hope, and then the most troubled voyage shall have a blessed end; and in the last review of the roughest passage your testimony will be, "He hath done all things well."

**Vers. 18—44.—*The escape from shipwreck.*** The particular feature in this part of the narrative of the shipwreck to which attention is now invited is the sacrifices by which the final escape was effected. The eighteenth verse finds the whole party on board the ship in an encounter with a furious tempest. We can easily picture to ourselves the sea running high, the vessel crouching as it were before the wind, the waves breaking over the side of the ship, and the water beginning to fill her. At this moment the relative value of things in the mind of the master and crew undergoes a great change. The freight of the ship—so precious in the owner's eyes, acquired at great cost, put on board with much labour, and on which was set the hope of great gains when the vessel should reach the Italian shore—now loses all its value in his eyes. Something more

precious is at stake—the ship itself, and the lives of those on board; and so the sacrifice must be made. They throw the freight overboard in order to lighten the ship, that it and all that are in it may not go down to the bottom of the deep. Some relief from the pressing danger seems to have followed this step. For a time the vessel was relieved, and rode more buoyantly upon the troubled waves. But the relief was only temporary. The ship began again to fill with water, and the danger was greater than ever. Some fresh sacrifice must be made if she was to be kept afloat. And so with their own hands they cast all the tackling into the sea (note on ver. 19). Things which once seemed necessary to their comfort, things without which the ship could never have started on her way, are now ruthlessly destroyed. They stand in the way of saving something more precious than themselves—the ship and its freight of human life—and so they are cast into the sea. But the needful sacrifices are not yet complete. For eleven more days the ship keeps afloat, though every hour might seem to be her last. But on the fourteenth night a new element of danger appeared. They were close upon a lee shore, and so their only chance of safety was to run her upon the soft beach. But how could this be done? There still remained in her the precious cargo of wheat which she was carrying from Alexandria to Italy. Lightened of this heavy load, there was a hope that she might run upon the beach, so that they might jump out and be saved. And so this sacrifice was made too. They threw out the wheat into the sea, for their lives were more precious than even the golden grain; and they escaped all safe to the land. This account exactly illustrates the Christian's career. There is a time when the things of this world—wealth, or reputation, or the world's friendship, or certain habits and opinions—are of supreme importance in his eyes. By-and-by some conjuncture arises in which he has to choose between them and the salvation of his soul. There is a struggle at first, and an unwillingness to part with them. But as the things of God rise in their immensity before his eyes, and it becomes clear that the sacrifice must be made if he would enter into life, his mind is made up. What things were gain to him, those he counts but loss for Christ, for whom he suffers loss of all things, and counts them but dung that he may win Christ. He makes the calculation, "What shall it profit me, if I gain the whole world and lose my own soul?" and the decision is not uncertain. Thus the Hebrew Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and enduring substance. Thus Levi at the receipt of custom, at the call of Jesus, left all, and rose up and followed him. But it often happens that the whole sacrifice is not made at once, nor does the necessity for it become apparent at once. Some lighter loss is sustained at first, and the lightened soul moves easier on her spiritual way for a while. But then some new danger arises. This time it is the sacrifice of the man's self, some part as it were of his very being, that has to be made. The right hand has to be cut off, or the right eye plucked out, if he would enter into life. But still the decision is the same. There is nothing that he can give or take in exchange for his soul. The sufferings and losses of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed; and even in those extreme cases where the choice has to be made between life itself on the one hand, and faithfulness to Christ on the other, the true believer falters not. He well knows that the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal; and so he cheerfully lays down his life on earth that he may not make shipwreck of eternity. So the blessed Paul himself was led on from loss to loss, but through loss to eternal gain. His legal privileges, his blameless righteousness, his high standing as a Pharisee among Pharisees, his consideration among his equals, his rabbinical learning, his boasted superiority, all fell one by one before the excellency of Christ. Desiring to be the honoured benefactor of his race, he found himself the offscouring of all things, hunted down and persecuted as one not worthy to live. But still his views of Christ's gospel kept enlarging; his conceptions of the blessedness of being in Christ kept brightening; the righteousness of Christ, and the glory of Christ, kept growing in the intensity of their all-absorbing interest, and so he was led on to suffer loss upon loss, and to heap labour upon labour, and to endure affliction upon affliction; till from being the prisoner of the Lord he became the faithful martyr of Jesus Christ, and laid down his very life in sure anticipation of receiving the crown of righteousness at the hand of the righteous Judge, when he should plant his foot in triumph upon the shore of eternal life.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—44.—*The voyage of life.*** The journey which is described in this twenty-seventh chapter may suggest to us some of the main features of the long voyage of our life.

**I. THE VARIETY IN OUR COMPANIONSHIPS.** As each passenger on board found himself inseparably associated with a strange admixture of fellow-travellers, so we find ourselves compelled to mingle, more or less closely, with various companions as we and they journey together over the waters of life. There are (1) those who have a right to command us (the captain); (2) those in whose power we stand (the soldiers, ver. 42); (3) those who are bound to care for our safety (the sailors), many of whom will selfishly neglect their duty (ver. 30); (4) those who can enlighten, heal, refresh us in spirit or in body (Paul, Luke, Aristarchus); (5) fellow-sufferers (the prisoners).

**II. THE NEED FOR LABOUR AND FOR PATIENCE.** Not only did the sailors strive strenuously to discharge their nautical duties (vers. 7, 8, 17), but all the passengers worked with all their strength in co-operation with them (vers. 16, 19). And with what long patience had they to wait, not merely at Fair Haven, "where much time was spent," but also and chiefly when the vessel was drifting before the wind, "when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared" (ver. 20), and when riding at anchor, and fearing greatly that they would be forced on the neighbouring rocks, they "wished for the day." Labour and patience are the two oars which will bring the boat to shore in the everyday passage of our life.

**III. THE CERTAINTY OF HARDSHIP AND PERIL, MORE OR LESS SEVERE.** The winds are sure to be contrary, as in the earlier part of this celebrated voyage (vers. 4, 7, 8), and they may be tempestuous, as they were at the latter part (vers. 14, 18, 27). We must reckon upon some adversity, some checks and disappointments, as certain to befall us; we ought to be prepared for calamity and disaster. No human voyager across the sea of life can tell that there is not a very cyclone of misfortune through which he is about to pass.

**IV. THE EXCELLENCY OF A REFUGE IN GOD.** What an admirable figure does Paul present in this interesting picture! What calmness he shows (vers. 21—25)! What comfort he conveys! What strength he affords (vers. 33—36)! What ascendancy he acquires (ver. 43)! It is the prisoner, Paul, who is the central figure there, not the centurion, nor even the captain. If in the emergencies that will arise, in the crises that must occur, on those occasions when the higher virtues and heavenlier graces are demanded, we would show ourselves brave, noble, helpful, truly admirable, let us see to it that we have then—because we seek *now*—a Friend, a Refuge, a Stay in Almighty God.

**V. THE OCCASIONAL DEMAND FOR SACRIFICE.** To save life they "lightened the ship" (ver. 18); they "cast out the tackling" (ver. 19); they "cast out the wheat into the sea" (ver. 38). To save moral or spiritual integrity it is well worth while, and sometimes positively necessary, to abandon that which is precious to us as citizens of this present life (Matt. xviii. 8, 9).

**VI. THE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING THE SHORE. (Ver. 44.)** In one way or another they all came "safe to land." We may arrive at the end like the captain who steers into port, his vessel whole, every sail spread to the wind, rich and glad with a prosperous voyage; or we may reach the strand like Paul and his fellow-passengers, on planks and broken pieces of the ship. We may die honoured, strong, influential, triumphant, or we may reach our end poor, unregarded, shattered. It is of small account, so that we do reach that blessed shore—so that we are "found in him," the Divine Saviour, and pass to his presence and his glory.—C.

**Ver. 3.—*Spiritual refreshment.*** We like to think of Paul at Sidon. We are not only glad to know that he had the opportunity of gaining such material provision as would help to mitigate the severities of the long weeks of suffering in store; we like to dwell on that one day's "happy interlude," when, forgetting the imprisonment at Caesarea, and ignorant of the imprisonment at Rome, he spent some hours of spiritual refreshment among his friends. We may dwell upon—



**I THE NEED OF SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT.** Our minds may be comparatively strong; our health may be sound; our spiritual faculties may be capable of very vigorous activity; but the time comes before many months, or perhaps weeks, or even days, when we need recreation and refreshment. The Father "worketh hitherto"—the omnipotent One, he who slumbereth not nor sleepeth, is putting forth untiring activity without cessation. But he is the Infinite One, the everlasting God who fainteth not, neither is weary; and even of him it is said that he "rested from his works." In some sense that was true even of the Supreme. We, with our feebleness and frailty, capable of such small and slight exertion, so soon weary with our work, need frequently recurring rest and refreshment of soul. Not only in mechanical industry or in mental exertion, but in philanthropic activities, and even in religious exercises, we need rest, change, and refreshment.

**II. THE JUSTIFICATION OF IT.** Can we spare any time from duties so imperative as are ours who are engaged in holy usefulness, for mere recreation? Is it right to be passive, to leave the weapon untouched, the ground untilled, when so much is calling and even crying to be done, when such terrible weeds and thistles are disfiguring the "garden of the Lord"? It is right. We have: 1. The warrant of our Lord himself: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile" (Mark vi. 31); and he himself often retired into the lonely mountain-fold for rest and refreshment of spirit. 2. Apostolic example (Gal. i. 18). 3. The experience of the wise and good of all ages. 4. The argument from necessity. Without it we break down; our spirit and our body are prostrated; the usefulness of our life is cut short. With it we regain strength, heart, and nerve for continued activity and helpfulness.

"Oh, rest awhile, but only for a while;

Life's business presses, and the time is short.

Ease may the weary of reward beguile;

Let not the workman lose what he has wrought.

"Rest for a while, if only for a while;

The strong birds tire, and gladly seek their nest.

With quiet heart enjoy Heaven's quiet smile:

What strength has he who never takes his rest?"

**III. THE SOURCES OF IT.** We naturally suggest (1) relaxation of ordinary effort, of whatever kind it be; (2) change of scene and of employment. These are the simple and efficacious expedients which we commonly adopt. But beside these, we may mention; (3) genial and inspiring companionships—the finding out such "friends" as those of our text, and having free, unfettered intercourse with them; and (4) the solitude which suggests communion with God, that measure of loneliness which, without oppressing us, will send our thoughts first inward and then upward, in quiet meditation and in soothing, sustaining, refreshing prayer.

"Oh, rest awhile, for rest is self-return;

Leave the loud world, and visit thine own breast.

The meaning of thy labours thou wilt learn,

When thus at peace, with Jesus for thy Guest."

Q

**Vers. 4, 8.—Endeavour and attainment.** The voyage from Sidon to the port of Fair Havens supplies us with an apt illustration of human labour struggling with adverse forces, but ultimately realizing its purpose. For the attainment of our hope, there must ordinarily be—

**I. FULL ARRANGEMENT BEFOREHAND.** Julius had to convey his prisoners westward: for this purpose he wanted soldiers, a sea-route, vessels that would be making the passage at this time. All this he provided carefully or calculated upon correctly enough (see ver. 6). We cannot hope to execute our purpose without a thorough consideration and preparation beforehand. We must always count the cost and provide the means. We may be engaged in God's work, but we must not presume that Providence will interpose to make good our carelessness, our negligence, our want of prevision and provision.

**II. PATIENT LABOUR.** From point to point they made their way; with the winds against them, they at length made Myra (ver. 5). "They sailed slowly many days," but they went on towards Cnidus (ver. 7). They had much work to pass Salmone (ver. 8); but by dint of persevering labour they reached the port. Whether we seek knowledge, material resources, position, influence, or the accomplishment of any great enterprise in philanthropy or religion, we must be prepared for patient labour. We must make our way from point to point, struggling with "contrary winds," "hardly passing," but managing to make our way beyond this mark and that, finally reaching our goal—*exhausted*, perhaps, but *successful*.

**III. THE SUBMISSION WHICH PREVAILS.** Julius would not have arrived at Fair Havens when he did, had not the captains of the vessels in which he sailed conquered the forces with which they had to contend *by a wise submission*. The captain of the "ship of Adramyttium" sailed on the other side of Cyprus from that on which he meant to steer, "because the winds were contrary" (ver. 4). "The wind not suffering" them, they did not enter Cnidus when they were "off" it (ver. 7). We must direct our course, guided by events. We are too feeble to carry our projects through without frequent tacking and changing. We may be resolutely firm in our *principle*, though we may vary our *policy* as circumstances may demand. We often find it wise to yield *one* thing in order to gain *another* which is not inconsistent with the end in view. We do well to concede *small* things that we may secure *greater* ones. If our aim is a pure and noble one, we shall gladly bend to the "contrary winds," if only we may, by taking another course, reach the Fair Havens which we seek. Between one man surrendering principles to gain position or resources for himself, and another man yielding to opposing winds in order to effect a high and beneficent purpose, there lies all the distance between meanness and magnanimity.

**IV. READY USE OF FAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES.** (Ver. 6.) If we would do good and great things in our day, we must not only use the weapons which are thrust into our hands, but must eagerly and actively seize upon them when they are in reach. The centurion *found*, on seeking for it, a ship sailing in his direction. Many men are very near to failures in business, in society, in sacred service, because they expect opportunity to seek them out, instead of their looking keenly out for opportunity. Then comes—

**V. JOYOUS ATTAINMENT.** (Ver. 8.) We arrive at the Fair Havens, the port of our hope, and the peaceful harbour is the pleasanter to our eye for the toil and the submission we have exercised to gain it.—C.

**Vers. 12—15.—Disappointment.** Disappointment is the strong reaction of the soul where it nurses an eager expectation and fails to secure the object of its hope. The familiar pleasantry which affirms the blessedness of him that expects nothing, is only a pleasantry; it does not contain any other grain of truth than that it is wise not to cherish hopes which are unlikely to be fulfilled, and this is a very simple truism. For—

**I. HOPE IS A CONSTANT RESIDENT OF THE HUMAN SOUL.** "Thou didst make me hope upon my mother's breasts" (Ps. xxii. 9). Man must hope for that which is beyond him; otherwise he would sink fast and far in the scale of being. 1. We may set our heart on exchanging the insufficient for the satisfactory. That was the case here. The port of Fair Havens was "not commodious to winter in" (ver. 12); the sailors could not be satisfied that they were safe until they reached another which lay "toward the south-west and north-west" (Phenice). 2. Or we may desire to pass from the unsuitable to the appropriate; as when he who has left boyhood behind him desires to have the heritage of manhood. 3. Or we may long to move on from the good to the better; as when a man strives to rise to the higher post, to the superior position, to the wider sphere. Such hope is, in the first case, obligatory; in the second, desirable; in the third, allowable. But such is the feebleness of our nature and such the frailty of our efforts that—

**II. DISAPPOINTMENT IS OFTEN WAITING UPON HOPE.** How often does the "south wind blow softly" (ver. 13), and we think we "have obtained our purpose," and make ready to enter our "desired haven," when suddenly there arises "a tempestuous wind," and the "ship cannot bear up" (ver. 15), and we have to "let her drive" whither she will, but not whither *we* will! How often does some relentless Euroclydon interpose

between us and the fruition of our hope! From childhood to old age, disappointment embitters the cup of life, saddens the spirit of man. It is the little child that fails to receive its coveted toy; it is the boy that does not quite win the prize; it is the young man who nearly secures the post, but is overmatched in the lists; it is the lover who returns with a heavy heart; it is the mother who cannot save the young life from an infant's grave; it is the statesman who is passed by that a favourite may have the portfolio; it is the student, the traveller that does not make the discovery to which he seemed so near;—it is the seeking, striving, yearning human heart that opens to receive and is bitterly disappointed. Of all the evils which fall upon and darken the path of life there is none more common, none more powerful, none more ill to bear. Beneath its blow, how many a heart has bled to death! under its cruel weight, how many who live about us and whose path we cross are compelled to "go softly all their days"! Let us thank God that—

III. THERE IS A REFUGE EVEN FROM DISAPPOINTMENT. The sailors in our text had very little consolation when they could not "obtain their purpose." There was no other harbour for which to make. But when disappointment comes to the human soul in the strife and conflict of life, there is always a resort to which the heart may flee, a haven in which to hide. It can always fall back on either (1) the sympathy and succour of the unfailing Friend, or (2) the hope "which maketh not ashamed," "that sure and steadfast hope which entereth within the veil."—C.

Vers. 23—25.—*Divine ownership and human service.* 1. **THE EXTENT OF THE DIVINE CLAIM.** "Whose I am." God's claim upon our service is simply complete; it is impossible to conceive of a tie stronger or more perfect. It rests on: 1. His absolute sovereignty over the universe. 2. His creation of our spirit; the fact that he called us out of nothingness into being, that he conferred on us our spiritual nature and our bodily life. 3. His preservation of us in being. 4. His provision for all our wants, constant and generous. 5. His fatherly love prompting him to the bestowment of all his gifts, and greatly enhancing their value. 6. His redemption of us by Jesus Christ his Son; in this the last manifestation of Divine goodness, ratifying, multiplying his claim on us beyond all measure. "We are not our own: we are bought with a price;" "Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19). Resting on such solid ground, God's claim on us is very great. He asks of us that we "yield ourselves unto him;" that we offer ourselves, all that we are and have, to himself and his service, that he may enlarge and employ and bless us. This giving of ourselves unto God, this act of self-surrender by which "living or dying we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 8), involves (1) the subjection of our will to the will of God; (2) the opening of our heart to the love of Christ; (3) the purpose of our soul to spend our lives and powers in his service.

II. **THE DIVINE COMMUNICATION.** God has been pleased to make some special communications to certain favoured individuals of our race. The Apostle Paul was one of these, and this shipwreck through which he passed was one of the occasions on which he sent his angel with a message from his own mind (text). But though the great majority of our race pass through life without such direct and special manifestation, we are all addressed by the Father and Saviour of our spirits. God speaks to us: 1. In his Word. 2. By his Son, who is ever saying to each human heart that hears his gospel, "Believe in me;" "Abide in me;" "Follow me;" "Work in my vineyard." 3. By his Holy Spirit, who comes with enlightening, quickening, renewing energy to the individual soul.

III. **THE RESPONSE WE SHOULD RENDER.** 1. *Faith.* "I believe God." God (1) gives us strong and sufficient evidence that it is he who is speaking; and then (2) asks us to believe unquestioningly what he tells us. He tells us many things of himself and of ourselves, and particularly of our direct relation to himself, which we could not have divined by our own imagination, which we cannot prove by our own reason, which we are not able to comprehend by our own perceptive powers; but it is reasonable and right that, having the strongest evidence that God is speaking to us, we should accept with creature humility and filial trust what we cannot fathom now, assured that, by believing his Word and acting on our belief, we shall rise to a height where we shall see what is now invisible and understand what is now beyond us. This is only what



we have already done in the days of our childhood, on a smaller and earthly plane. 2 *Service.* "Whom I serve." This service (1) *begins* with the grateful and cordial acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of the soul: "This is [to do] the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John vi. 29; see 1 John iii. 23); (2) *continues* through life in the endeavour to please Christ in everything, to adorn his doctrine, to exalt his Name and extend his kingdom; (3) *is consummated* in the heavenly service of the future life. Then, there, in very deed and truth, with undimmed and untiring devotion, "his servants shall serve him" (Rev. xxii. 3).—C.

Vers. 24, 31.—*The Divine and the human will.* These two verses have an appearance of inconsistency. How, it may be asked, can both be true? If God had given Paul "all them that sailed with him," and this so certainly that the apostle could say without qualification, "There shall be no loss of any man's life" (ver. 22), how could the desertion of the shipmen (ver. 31) have imperilled the safety of the passengers so that Paul exclaimed, "Except these abide," etc.? The answer to this question is found in the truth that *God's promises to his children are always conditional on their obedience to his will.* So truly is this the case, and so practically, that it is not only possible we may bring about the non-fulfilment of the Divine promise, but certain that we shall do so, if we do not comply with the conditions which are expressed or understood. We may find—

I. HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS of this principle. 1. Gen. i. 26—31 and vi. 5—7. 2. Exod. iii. 7—8 and Numb. xiv. 28—34. 3. 2 Sam. vii. 12—16 and 1 Kings x. 11—13, with 1 Kings xii. 16.

II. INDIVIDUAL ILLUSTRATIONS of it. 1. Our entrance into the kingdom of Christ. We know that it is the will of God that all who hear the gospel should be saved by it (1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9; Ezek. xxxiii. 11). But we also know that those will never enter the kingdom who will not repent and believe (John iii. 36; v. 40; ch. xiii. 46). 2. Our progress in the Christian race. God wills our sanctification; he has arranged that they who enter into life by faith in Jesus Christ shall grow in grace, in strength, in virtue (1 Thess. iv. 3; Eph. v. 26, 27; 2 Pet. i. 5—8, etc.). But it is certain that if we neglect the means of grace and growth we shall not advance, but recede (John xv. 4, 6; Heb. x. 23—25). 3. Our admission to the heavenly kingdom. God promises his children a place in his eternal home (John xiv. 2, 3; 2 Tim. iv. 8). But the crown of life will only be given to those who are faithful unto death (Rev. ii. 10). It is only he that overcometh that will "eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. ii. 7), and who will be made "a pillar in the temple, . . . to go no more out" (Rev. iii. 12). It is only they who have put out their talents to whom the "Well done" of the Divine Lord will be addressed (Matt. xxv. 14—30). "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it" (Heb. iv. 1).—C.

Ver. 41.—*The shipwreck of the soul.* We are familiar with scenes of shipwreck; the stories read in childhood and the stern facts of later years bring them vividly before our minds. We see the gallant vessel, well rigged and fitted from stern to stern, sailing forth on her mission of transport or merchandise, moving along under favourable breezes, seeming likely to make the port where she is due; we see her overtaken by the storm, admitting the water which gains hour by hour upon her, sinking lower and lower, finally going down beneath the waves. But sad as this story is, there is a far more profound and pathetic sadness in the history, only too often to be told, of the shipwreck of a human soul. Bravely setting forth on the voyage of life, hopefully speeding on its course with helpful influences, promising to make its port on the other strand, we see it overtaken by the storm of some mastering temptation or falling into the irresistible current of some adverse spiritual force, and it makes melancholy shipwreck; instead of reaching its Fair Haven, it goes down into the waters of destruction. Some are wrecked in—

I. THEIR RELIGIOUS FAITH. They start on the voyage of life with that one chart in hand which alone can take them safely to their journey's end—the Word of the living God. Then they come into contact with fascinating but unbelieving companions; or they meet with a number of specious but shallow objections; or they look, with foolish and cruel persistency, on the one side of the difficulties, neglecting to pay pro-

portionate attention to the arguments on the other side; and the end is that the vessel of their faith breaks up and at length goes down.

II. **THEIR MORAL HABITS.** Trained in godly homes, our youths and maidens acquire habits of moral excellency; they enter active life, honest, pure, sober, reverent, prudent. But they encounter those hurtful and deadly influences which, after a while, if not at the first attack, lead them down to dishonesty, to impurity, to intemperance, to profanity, to the pestilent habit of gambling. Usually they "make shipwreck of a good conscience," as the vessel is drawn upon the relentless rocks when it is caught in the strong current from which it cannot escape. Slowly, going further and further in the wrong direction, by every movement getting more at the mercy of the foe, the vessel drifts to destruction.

III. **SPIRITUAL LIFE.** One of the sad spectacles which we have often to witness is the decline and disappearance of the spiritual life which was in the soul. By degrees—for this loss is commonly gradual—reverence becomes weaker, zeal decays, sacred joy grows dim and dull, habits of devotion are relaxed, the regard for the will of Christ becomes feeble and less effective, until life is really gone, and the soul has become a spiritual wreck. The shipwreck of the soul is: 1. *Inexpressibly sad.* By how much the spiritual is greater than the material and the destinies of a human soul larger and longer than the fortune of a piece of human handiwork, by so much is the wreck of a soul a more pitiful thing than the loss of the noblest bark that ever foundered on the ocean. 2. *Not absolutely final.* Sometimes, but very seldom, a sunken vessel is raised, and "ploughs the main" once more; sometimes, but seldom, a soul that has lost faith, virtue, piety, is raised up from the deep, and sails again on its voyage, and attains its port. Let none presume; let none despair. 3. *An evil that may always be averted.* The mind that is open to the truth which is before it, that keeps clear of the dangers of which it is warned, that uses the spiritual resources which the generous Lord has supplied, will not make shipwreck, but reach, unharmed and safe, the heavenly harbour.—C.

Vers. 1—44.—*The voyage to Italy: an allegory of the Christian's course.* Bunyan wrote an immortal allegory of the Christian course as a journey by land. It may be rewritten as a sea-voyage.

I. **THE CHRISTIAN SETS OUT IN STRANGE COMPANY, AND WITH OFTEN UNCONGENIAL SURROUNDINGS.** Romans, Macedonians, prisoners, Alexandrians, are Paul's fellow-voyagers (vers. 1, 2, 4—8). No seclusion, no picked society nor refined retirement, can be or ought to be the usual lot of the Christian. We cannot go out of the world. In society, among all the diversities of human character, our education and trial must go on, our experience be gained. The greater the variety of men, the more eliciting of our capabilities, the larger scope for doing good.

II. **THE CHRISTIAN IS SURE TO MEET WITH FRIENDS.** A friend and hospitality is to be found at most ports (ver. 3). And love begets love. Captain Julius, another of those fine Roman soldiers who cross the stage of the Christian story, is glad of an excuse to show the kindness of his heart to his prisoner. Oh, let us believe in the human heart; if we speak to it in the tones of love, it will give back its sweet echo everywhere. Unexpected acts of friendship are revelations of God to us in lonely places and sad hours.

"I fancied he was fled,  
And after many a year,  
Glowed unexhausted kindness  
Like daily sunrise there."

III. **CLOUDY SKIES.** (Vers 9—15.) Forebodings of danger are felt as the Christian goes on. Sunny life-seasons, the joys of calm friendship, must give place to dark skies and danger. The changing drama of nature mirrors the story of the human soul. The Christian, taught by experience, becomes prophetic, like Paul. The centurion and the master of the ship may typify that blind obstinacy which will persevere with its designs in the teeth of nature's laws. Nothing fatal occurs without previous warnings. In the natural and in the moral world we constantly come upon effects without visible causes. But the causes exist and are in action. Hence the constant duty of sobriety

and watchfulness. The deep lesson of the gospel here illustrated is that we ought not to be taken at unawares.

**IV. UNBELIEVING FEAR AND BELIEVING CONFIDENCE.** The former in vers. 16—20. To save dear life men will cast their treasures as worthless dross into the sea. And when, in spite of all, death seems near and inevitable, nothing is left but despair. But if earthly life itself is well lost for the sake of the immortal soul, hope need not set, but rather rise, like the morning star, above these troubled waves. This contrast is brought out by the behaviour of the apostle (vers. 21—26). Through the many sunless and starless days and nights, hope shines unquenched within his breast. There are reflections of such times within the horizon of the soul (Isa. xi. 10; lxiii. 17). Reason contends with faith; and in struggle with itself the spirit becomes conscious of its power and victory through God. Paul supports himself on a Divine intimation, confirming the promise of the past (ch. xxiii. 11). The great thing is to be intent upon our work and witness; then comes the sense of security, the faith that no harm can come nigh us until our work be done.

“Too busied with the crowded hour  
To fear to live or die.”

It will be felt deeply true that—

“On two days it steads not to run from thy grave—  
The appointed and the unappointed day;  
On the first neither balm nor physician can save,  
Nor thee on the second the universe slay.”

**V. SHIPWRECK AND LANDING.** (Vers. 39—44.) The day breaks. The face of God appears after the night of weeping and watching. When need is sorest, he is nearest. Yet his light leads to strange and unfamiliar scenes: “They knew not the land.” The scenery that unfolds before the soul in the great crises of life or in the hour of death is that of a foreign shore. Death is a great break-up of all our familiar and trusted associations, and great experiences of change in the soul may resemble it in this. Their use is to teach self-reliance—that true self-reliance which identifies God with the truest impulses of the soul. At the moment when all seems lost, all is gained. The foreign and seeming unfriendly shore proves a haven and a home; the restless sea tosses them from its bosom to *terra firma*, and to a rest. So to the faithful soul do the fears and fancies of the terrified imagination give way to fixed prospects, and we are wrecked in transitory conditions that we may find a footing in the eternal.—J.

**Vers. 21—36.—The example of Paul in the storm.** **I. HIS FIRM FAITH IN HIS GOD, AND THE PEACE OF SOUL THENCE FLOWING.** We may compare the picture of the Saviour on the lake of Galilee. “Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?”

**II. HIS CONSEQUENT CALMNESS AND PRUDENCE IN COUNSEL.** He sets aside, with clear presence of mind, mistaken plans (vers. 27—32); he encourages dispirited minds (vers. 33—38); he acts with the fidelity of a pastor to the souls he feels committed to his care.

**III. HIS PROPHETIC POWER.** It is seen in warning of danger (ver. 10), and exhortation amidst trial. The spirit of the prophet is at home amidst the storms of the world; flits like the petrel above the troubled waves. He has heard of the still small voice; the noise and crash of elemental war cannot shut out the melody of God. He rides upon the waters, directs the storm, furnishes an ark for the faithful in secret. God is our Refuge and Strength; this song was singing throughout in the heart of Paul.

**IV. HIS LOVING, THANKFUL, AND HOPEFUL SPIRIT.** (Vers. 34—36.) He breaks bread with the company, gives thanks, and utters the divinest and most successful consolation. A picture again that recalls the scene of the last Supper.—J.

**Ver. 25.—The victory of faith.** “Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer,” etc. The position of Paul in the voyage. Though a prisoner, yet really the ruler of the ship. An example of moral influence. The root of his character was neither his intellectual



superiority nor the mere moral goodness of his motives, but his consciousness of direct intercourse with God. God had "spoken unto him."

I. TRUE FAITH OVERCOMETH THE WORLD. 1. By bringing in the light of the better world—so foreseeing the end, measuring present circumstances, maintaining physical and moral strength. 2. By lifting up the individual life into the sphere of the Divine purposes. Paul felt that he was living for Christ, and, as an ambassador, must be protected. 3. By cheering the heart with benevolence. "God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee." The sense of a philanthropic value in our own life is wonderfully cheering. We are doing good: what does it signify where we are, and how we are placed? Those around us must bless God for us.

II. THE VICTORIOUS LIFE OF FAITH IS THE ONLY LIFE WORTH LIVING. 1. The shipwreck of worldly confidence. Human wisdom, physical force, political supremacy—all fail. Our temptation in these days to trust in schemes of social remedy. Christianity alone can say, "Be of good cheer." 2. The Christian in the presence of suffering and death. Instances resembling Paul's. Mackenzie in the *Pegasus*. Then comes the trial of confidence, and what we want is to say, "I believe in God." 3. The ministry of the believer in a perishing, despairing world. Each one able to say to some and somewhere, "Be of good cheer." 4. The prophetic power of Christianity. Not idle dreaming, not fanatical predicting of events, but the certainty of the future brought to bear upon the present. One who can say, "I believe that so it shall be," and who can show by his fortitude and cheerfulness that he does believe it, will be as a light in the world's darkness. Such a narrative rebukes the folly of our modern necromancy and soothsaying, and incites us to be true children of the day and of the light.—R.

Vers. 20—25.—*The bad man's extremity, God and the good man's opportunity.* The contents of this chapter are, in some respects, amongst the most striking and instructive for the deeper facts of human life and nature, in all the book. 1. The interplay of human action and of Divine providence, the harmony of human responsibility and Divine purpose, are forcibly illustrated more than once. 2. The moral superiority, the *real* strength, the solid ground to stand upon, which are the portion of the man with whom the truth of God dwells, in comparison of two hundred and fifty others, though he be the prisoner and they his masters, or at least their own, are most impressively exhibited and vindicated. Supposing that we read rightly, that there were as many as two hundred and seventy-six souls in that tossed boat, we may say that the length of this long chapter shows *one* man—him the chief prisoner—as *the* man whose heart fails him not, who revives the hearts of the others, when at all they are revived, and in whom, under God, the hope of all centres. The force of this contrast makes the chapter one of sustained and unique interest, on the one hand, and, on the other, strews its path with suggestions of instruction. Though we read nothing positive respecting the state of mind of the personal companions and friends of Paul (the one of whom was the historian of the book, who for that very reason probably modestly abstains from speaking of himself), there is no reason to doubt that they shared the strength and peace and confident faith of Paul himself. In this present passage we may notice these four things in chief.

I. THE FORCIBLE DESCRIPTION OF "MAN'S EXTREMITY." 1. It involves outwardly, in one common condition, the bad and the good. 2. It is day without one sight of the sun, night without the radiance of one star; it is tempest of wind and wave without respite; it is the heart "without hope." 3. It is the strain of long continuance of the same. This scriptural description may be taken to cover pretty well the subject, and brings any one sufficiently face to face with the question whether there be any higher, friendly power able, willing to interpose.

II. THE "PROPER MAN" FOR THE HOUR. 1. He is the man "in chains." 2. He is the man to whom the Roman centurion cannot help showing some consideration (vers. 3, 11, 31, 32, 43), though he has the care of him for Cæsar's judgment-seat. 3. He is a man who knows what is due to himself, and, denying all traffic with the spirit of obsequiousness, holds his own, and dares to say, "You see I was in the right" (vers. 10, 21). 4. Though he might well have stood off from the rest in the boat, and been excused for doing so easily by them, yet he does not take this course, not play this part. He throws himself and lot in with them and theirs. 5. He is the preacher of

comfort and of courage, and the confident prophet of hope and safety, but tells the bad also with the good (ver. 26). 6. He is the genuine religious man, not "ashamed of Christ," and plainly tells the source of his own confidence and of the firm language he holds to his congregation of the boat, for all that he may be called or thought fanatical.

III. THE GOD WHO MADE THAT MAN OF THE HOUR. Let alone all which that God had done in the remoter past, and the earlier heretofore of his life, what had he done lately? 1. That God did not forget his child, his servant, his anxious sufferer. He had long so served Paul that nothing was more precious to him than to think he was the acknowledged and sure possession of God—"whose I am;" and no livery conceivable so honourable as his—"whom I serve." And now with gentle witness he makes him know that he does not forget him, has not taken his eye off from him, but is following him with that watchful, careful, loving eye. And "he sends his holy angel" to him. 2. That God strengthened and refreshed the confidence of his child and servant in a very noteworthy manner. For he condescends to *repeat* himself. *Again* he sends his angel, again the visit is the visit of the night, when "deep sleep falleth upon men" generally, but when little now visited the eyes of Paul or of others in that boat. Again the angel "stands by" Paul, ready for march, for work, for conflict, for victory. He does not over-hover nor seem in the attitude that would suggest the upward flight for Paul. Firmly on earth that angel of God condescends to plant his feet. Again the former words are repeated (ch. xxiii. 11). Was it not enough that "God had spoken *once*," saying that the eyes of Paul should see Rome, and that he should preach in Rome? Again, however, the assurance is given him, and again the word of direct encouragement is addressed to the heart of Paul, "Be of good cheer" (ch. xxiii. 11); "Fear not, Paul." 3. That God sets double and very high honour on his despised child and suffering servant. He "gives" to Paul "all them that sail with him." And it is not a secret covered gift, it is such a one as Paul can quote, and quoted, no doubt, not without Divine warrant, though this is not asserted. Thus the God who made Paul the man of the hour made him such in the strength of his kindly memory of him, in the comforting and assuring language he addressed to him, and in the practical honour, a very boon of honour, he bestowed upon him. It may have required some courage for Paul to have made this last announcement, except for one fact, significant enough, that by far the more part of "them that sailed with Paul" had none at all, had lost heart, and hope, and the tongue to jeer, and lip to mock, and countenance to laugh unbelievably, with all which it is highly likely his announcement would at any other time have been received.

IV. THE MEANS BY WHICH THAT MAN GOT HIS HOLD ON GOD. The declaration of these means stands on the page of the book and shines on the life of the man in simplicity, brevity, grandeur, *unique*. "For I believe God," says Paul. What a word is this! What a thing it is! How few say it firmly! How few who say it and even firmly, do it! How fewer still by far who consistently and persistently do it! Yet is it the secret of peace, of strength, of influence, of the only kind worth having and enduring, and of heavenly wealth. What does the man possess who can say this with simple, full truth, "For I believe God"? And what can he want? Of him this may be said, and it is enough, "He has all things and abounds." How mournful, pitiful, sinful, the instability of the man who cannot say this from the heart! How strong and safe from "shipwreck" the man who can!—B.

Vers. 30—32.—*A glimpse at human nature and its behaviour in three varieties at one and the same conjuncture.* The episode comprised in these few verses is full of startling effect. It displays human nature—that which is alike so one and so manifold—in this its latter aspect, rather than in the former. It invites us to look, to wonder, and, if wise, to be warned and learn in time. Let us notice the manifestation of human nature as made now by three varieties of people—

I. BY THE SHIPMEN. That is, by the "master and owner" of the ship (ver. 11), and evidently the officers and crew (ver. 27) of the ship. Every sentiment of honour, every plain demand of duty, called upon them to stand by their ship to the last, and to be the last to leave it. They now try to do all the reverse of this, competent to purpose it, and taken in the attempt to do it by craft, "under colour" of doing some-

thing else. They reveal: 1. Cowardice. That they should fear was natural and a sign that nature had not gone *callous* in them. But cowardice began when they did not face to the end what had now some days been a common danger, one for which they were in part themselves answerable, which they could *best* meet, and which others *must* meet. 2. Selfishness. They try to save themselves, (1) regardless of others who belonged to them, as if only so much freight; (2) and yet worse, *doubling* the risk of them, by (a) withdrawing their own professional help, and (b) withdrawing the boat. 3. The unfaithfulness of the hireling. Seldom could there be found a more *typical* instance of this (John x. 11—13). They *were* hired, they “cared nothing” for the lives of those entrusted to their charge, and they did attempt to “flee.” 4. The “wisdom in its generation” of human nature. For, balked of their purpose, and balked in a most transparent and peremptory manner, they are too “wise” to court lynch law; and they appear to follow the policy at once of saying nothing, and making the best of it. They fall into their places, and do whatever is to be done. So versatile can human nature be when it suits her.

II. BY PAUL. Paul under any showing was *the* character and the hero of the boat. We should not be content without knowing anything of him that opens to our view. A great deal does open to our view. He steps out not now for the first time since the storm began. It would be very far from the truth to say now that it was *only* human nature that we have the opportunity of seeing. No; the subordination of human nature was, perhaps, not yet perfect. Yet there was no willing strife (Rom. vii. 15—25), no great strife, no very distorting strife, between the human and the Divine in him. 1. Paul was the one calm watcher of everything that transpired. 2. His was the eye that read and that was then engaged in reading nature in others. It was in very deed, at any time, part of his office to do this very thing. 3. His was the eye that, so clear itself, detected the fraud, the would-be fraud of others. 4. His was the unfaltering tongue that declared it, though probably with no addition of safety to himself. 5. His was the mind conscious in its own rectitude and confident in God’s truth and providence, that does not for a moment hesitate to expose itself to being taxed with certain theological inconsistency. Most positively and publicly had he committed himself to the statement that God had promised him himself and “all them that sailed with him.” And yet he brings to the fore a condition, a new sort of proviso, and that one that postulated the help and co-operation of a number of godless and inhuman hirelings. These things all show, not only that the truest Christian need be no less a true man, but rather that it is only the true Christian who touches at all sufficiently the possibilities of the true man. For Paul the prisoner, on the way to trial, of many the despised, is nevertheless *the* man in every essential respect, in that boat, and succeeds in commanding not only a professed respect, but a practical obedience from all the rest.

III. BY THE ROMAN CENTURION AND SOLDIERS. 1. So soon as Paul has had his say, they see quickly, because their eyesight is keen by reason of the instinct of self-preservation. 2. They are not nice as to the source from which they derive their clue. Extreme peril has done a great deal to strip off from them all unnecessary artificiality, all dignified ceremony, all officialism and mere sense of authority. *Nature* itself stares them in the face, and puts not lispily the alternative—Where may all these be very soon? 3. They act, act at once, and act trenchantly too. They *cut off* escape from the coward and the knave and the supremely guilty. Let what may be said to them, let what may be threateningly looked at them, they *act*, for so it is given to human nature to do in the last resort. And those who do not act in the presence of the solemn, supreme dangers of life, cutting off escape from the evil-doers, though these be themselves, are the men who will be left yet more “without excuse” for what is written in the book, in this threefold illustration of human nature in the presence of peril.—B.

Vers. 33—36.—*An unexpected testimony to the force of goodness.* Not the least honourable testimony to Paul is contained in the incident related in this passage. It is one undeniable testimony among many as to where in the ultimate resort strength lies. It lies with goodness. It lies with the man who lives with God, works for Christ, is ruled in conscience and life by the dictates of the Spirit. Long periods may wear away first, and the most unpromising entanglements seem to forbid hope, but the vindication comes at last, and often in the most extraordinary and unanticipated way. For



what a transformation it is now which shows *the* prisoner of the whole company, and the man who before has seemed to run the gauntlet of one continuous contradiction of men, standing forth, not merely the observed of all observers, which he had often been before, but the one respectfully listened to, followed obediently, and really appreciated by the witness and unanimous consent of cheered hearts (ver. 36).

(A) Notice, then, the persecuted and misunderstood good man comes to be regarded—

I. As a FRIEND TO BE LISTENED TO.

II. As a FRIEND WHOSE GOOD CONFIDENCE IS WELCOMED AND SPREADS A GRATEFUL INFLUENCE.

III. As a FRIEND WHO IS PERMITTED TO URGE SIMPLE PRACTICAL DUTY

IV. As a FRIEND NOT MOCKED WHEN HE TEACHES RELIGION. Paul did thus teach, both (1) by word and (2) by his own act.

V. As ONE WHO, BY THE SIMPLE PURITY OF HIS FRIENDSHIP, IS RAISED TO THE POSITION OF THE MASTER OF ALL, IN A MORAL SENSE.

(B) But a second series of suggestive lessons lies before us in the same passage. Notice—

I. WHAT RESOURCELESS FEAR THE FEAR OF THE WICKED IS!

II. WHAT DISABLING FEAR THAT FEAR IS!

III. How IT TAKES ITS VERY FIRST REVENGE ON THAT OUTER LIFE FOR WHICH THE SINNER LIVES!

IV. WHAT DISCORD, DISTRUST, AND EVEN DISSERVICE ARE WROUGHT BY IT AMONG "THE COMPANY OF THE UNGODLY" THEMSELVES! They who were one long time to oppose the true, soon fall to opposing one another.

V. To WHAT DEEP SELF-CONVICTION OF SHAME AND HUMILIATION THE FEAR OF THE WICKED, EVEN IN THIS WORLD, REDUCES THEM, WHEN THEN FOR THE FIRST TIME THEY LEARN RESPECT FOR THE GOOD, AND BORROW CHEERFULNESS FROM THEM!—B.

Vers. 42—44.—*The means human, the power Divine.* A series of lessons are suggested here which the facts of life are proving by a constant analogy. Notice—

I. A LESSON OF HUMAN MEANS AND ACTIVITY. No one of all the two hundred and seventy-six were saved by anything that looked like supernatural help. All were saved either by their own exertions in swimming, or by these together, strange to say, with the aid of the mere fragments of their broken vessel.

II. TRUE GOODNESS HAS ITS IMPRESSION FOR THE MOST IGNORANT AND THE WORLDLY, ESPECIALLY IF THESE ARE HONEST. Whatever might be the religious ignorance or inexperience of the centurion, he evidently was impressed and attracted by the manner of Paul, or by his evident quality, or by both. He saves Paul. And probably his honesty was the real account of the impression he took.

III. THE GOOD CHARACTER OF ONE MAN WILL AVOID TO SAVE OTHERS WITH WHOM HE MAY BE CLASSED BY THE WORLD OR BY PROVIDENCE, THOUGH THEY BE NOT GOOD. Doubtless the righteous do sometimes perish with the wicked. How often are the wicked saved and the city spared for the sake of the few righteous! All the rest of the prisoners owed their safety (under God) to Paul and the silent influence of his integrity.

IV. GOD HIMSELF VOUCHSAFES TO SET ON ONE FAITHFUL SERVANT OF HIS THIS SAME MOST DISTINGUISHED KIND OF HONOUR. It is written, ay, it was divinely said by the angel that God "gave all them that sailed" in that boat to Paul.

V. ALL THINGS COME OF GOD. He it was, he only, who saves *all*.—B.

Ver. 3.—*The good man's power to win confidence.* "Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty;" and, in so doing, he did but act as almost everybody acted towards the great apostle who had anything to do with him. St. Paul had a remarkable power of personal fascination. For instances of the impression which he produced on individuals, compare ch. xviii. 14; xix. 31, 37. For Scripture illustrations of the power to win confidence, recall the incidents of Joseph's early life in Egypt, and the narrative of the three Hebrew youths as given by Daniel. For illustration in modern life, recall the liberty which the jailor gave to John Bunyan. Very possibly this Julius had heard Paul's address before Agrippa, and the kind consideration of the centurion must have been very helpful to the apostle, whose two years' imprisonment must have

told unfavourably upon his health, and who can have been but scantily provided with the requisites for a long voyage. We direct attention to that power which St. Paul evidently possessed, of winning the confidence and the favour of those who came into intimate contact with him; observing that—

**I. POWER TO WIN CONFIDENCE IS A NATURAL GIFT.** It belongs to some persons in an unusual degree. Children at once recognize and respond to it. We are wont to say that the true teacher is the person who can gain the confidence of the children. From some persons we instinctively shrink, to others we are as instinctively drawn. It is a power that belongs to natural disposition and character; it is a Divine endowment or gift, the talent entrusted to some. So far as it belongs to character we may notice its dependence on three elements. 1. *Transparency.* Some men make you feel their sincerity, honesty, integrity, guilelessness. They make you feel that you know them as they are, and that there is nothing hidden behind. 2. *Firmness.* Some men are changeable, undecided, and you cannot rely on them. Others may be slower in forming their judgments or expressing their decisions, but you know that you can trust them; they stand fast by their promise; they are as steady as a rock. 3. *Sympathy.* A mysterious attraction is in some persons as they seem to understand us and feel with us, and their brotherliness commands our confidence.

**II. POWER TO WIN CONFIDENCE IS A DIVINE TRUST.** It takes its place among the talents. It is our characteristic, a force for good which is entrusted to our use. It is ours as distinctly as may be the gifts of song, of eloquence, of art, of position, or of wealth. And this particular gift has even an unusual importance attaching to it, for, in inviting the trust of men in us, and meeting that trust faithfully, we may be revealing God to them and helping them to confidence in him. It is hard indeed for that man to have confidence in God who has never been able to rely on any of his fellow-men. This Divine "trust" brings its burden of responsibility. In relation to it we may be found faithful or unfaithful.

**III. POWER TO WIN CONFIDENCE IS CAPABLE OF CULTURE.** Not so much of direct as of indirect culture. As in other cases so in this, culture comes by use. To employ any talent, to exercise any gift, is to nourish it into strength; but those powers which belong to character are cultured in the general moral culture, in the daily training of the spirit and ordering of the life. Occasion may be taken here to plead for the duty of "keeping the heart with all diligence, seeing that out of it are the issues of life."

**IV. POWER TO WIN CONFIDENCE IS SANCTIFIED BY RELIGION.** This St. Paul well illustrates; his faith in God, his devotion to men, his renewed disposition, his sense of the living presence of Christ, the measure of his change into the very mind and image of Christ, all told directly on the purifying and perfecting of this his natural gift. Christian faith sanctifies character, especially bearing its force on those three features of transparency, firmness, and sympathy, on which we have seen the power to win confidence mainly depends. Impress that, from the Christian standpoint, a man will only use this power of drawing others to himself in order that he may draw them all to Jesus, and, in and through him, to God.—R. T.

**Ver. 10.—The mission of Divine warnings.** St. Paul was moved by God's Spirit to warn the sailors of the consequences of proceeding on the voyage. No doubt the apostle had a large experience of the sea, and in part gave his personal opinion, but we must recognize that he had the gift of foresight, and this may very readily, on occasion, pass into the gift of prophecy. We note that it is an almost universal method of Divine dealing to warn before judgment falls. Illustration may be found in Noah's warning before the flood, Jonah's warning to Nineveh, Daniel's to Nebuchadnezzar, the warnings of Jehovah's prophets, and our Lord's warning addressed to the guilty people of Jerusalem. We ask why these are given both to individuals and to nations, and what precise purposes do such warnings accomplish.

**I. THEY MAY BE PREVENTIVE OF CALAMITY.** St. Paul's would have been if it had been heeded. The warning of Jonah was, for the king and people of Nineveh did give heed to it. Explain that in the Divine rule of the world and men, no events need be regarded as absolutely and irrevocably settled. God's foreknowings and fore-ordinings are quite consistent with the conditional character of all events as regarded

by men. We can prevent overhanging calamities up to certain limits of time. We can if we will duly keep Divine principles, and heed Divine warnings.

II. THEY SHOW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MAN'S CONDUCT AND MAN'S CIRCUMSTANCES. This is always the point of a Divine warning. This connection we are always in peril of denying or of forgetting. If we possibly can we think of events as *accidents*, and then all moral relations and uses are taken away from them. We never can call them "accidents" in the face of Divine warnings, for these distinctly affirm that the character of the coming events depends upon ourselves. It should be carefully shown that public events may not depend on individuals, but they do upon social conditions; and it may also be shown that the wrong-doing of some *one* may involve the calamity of many. In further and more minutely unfolding the mission of Divine warnings, it may be shown that—

III. THEY MAKE MEN PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE, AND GIVE THEIR AFTER-ACTIONS A DISTINCT MORAL QUALITY. The warned man does not act at unawares. All excuses are taken away. The character of his proposed conduct is revealed to him in its issues. He acts upon knowledge, and the action is obedient or self-willed, good or bad.

IV. THEY SOLEMNLY AFFIRM THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND THE DIVINE OVERRULING OF ALL AFFAIRS. In man's wilfulness he says of some things, "They are mere calamities; man's conduct had nothing to do with them;" and then again of other events he will say, "They are simply the natural consequences of men's foolish and wicked doings, and we need not think that God has anything to do with them." Correcting both errors, God's warnings make us understand that he rules and overrules all events, all actions, all sins, "making the very wrath of man to praise him." Show, in conclusion, that warnings still come to us (1) through men; (2) through the Word; (3) through providences; (4) through the inward witnessings of God's Holy Spirit. Individuals and nations now cannot press on in paths of evil without finding, again and again, God's angel of warning blocking the way, as he did for foolish, covetous, wilful Balaam.—R. T.

Vers. 21—26.—*Good cheer from a good man.* This interesting incident of the voyage may be introduced by a description of the perilous condition of the vessel, and the distress and hopelessness of the sailors and passengers. Canon Farrar's careful narrative will be found helpful ('Life of St. Paul,' vol. ii. pp. 375, 376). A few sentences we may give: "The typhoon, indeed, had become an ordinary gale, but the ship had now been reduced to the condition of a leaky and dismantled hulk, swept from stem to stern by the dashing spray, and drifting, no one knew whither, under leaden and moonless heavens. A gloomy apathy began to settle more and more upon those helpless three hundred souls. There were no means of cooking, no fire could be lighted; the caboose and utensils must long ago have been washed overboard; the provisions had probably been spoiled and sodden by the waves that broke over the ship; indeed, with death staring them in the face, no one cared to eat. They were famishing wretches in a fast-sinking ship, drifting, with hopes that diminished day by day, to what they regarded as an awful and certain death. But in that desperate crisis, one man retained his calm and courage. It was Paul the prisoner, probably in physical health the weakest, and the greatest sufferer of them all. But it is at such moments that the courage of the noblest souls shines with the purest lustre, and the soul of Paul was inwardly enlightened." Notice the apostle's sensitiveness to visions at all the great crises of his life. He was a man of prayer, and when a man has gained the habit of communion with God, special times of nearness and revelation are sure to come. A man may, by prayer and communion, make the veil between himself and God very thin and very shadowy, only a mist through which the shinings of God may, at times, easily pass. If we inquire why, on this most depressing occasion, this one man Paul kept so cheerful and so hopeful, the answer is that in him we see the triumph of the man who is conscious of God's presence with him. St. Paul here gives an illustration of his own words, "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me." In these verses note—

I. THE GOOD MAN'S REPROOF. (Ver. 21.) It might seem unfitting and unkind to remind the officers of their past mistake; but St. Paul was a moral teacher, and everywhere he sought to do his moral and religious work. He would not miss the oppor-



tunity of producing a sense of sin which might be the beginning of better things. If his reproof had been a mere taunt, in the spirit of our irritating way of saying, "I told you so," it could not be commended. It belongs rather to the reproofs of which it may be said, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

II. THE GOOD MAN'S ASSURANCE. (Ver. 22.) It was found in the strong brave words St. Paul used, but even more in the *tone* with which they were uttered. There could be no question about his own assurance. On his own faith he could uplift and cheer others. Compare the calmness of St. Paul with the unnatural calmness of Jonah when the storm raged about him; and give illustration, from modern tales of shipwreck, of the power of the godly man to quiet alarm and prepare men for death.

III. THE GROUND OF THE GOOD MAN'S CONFIDENCE. (Vers. 23—26.) In this case a Divine communication. In other cases more general grounds, such as (1) our good Father's care and power; (2) the "exceeding great and precious promises;" or, sometimes, a strong impression made upon our minds. Impress that the power to cheer others may be won by any and every godly man. It follows upon a real living faith in God; it is the proper power of the man who is calm by reason of his trust in God, and cherished sense of the Divine presence.—R. T.

Ver. 38.—*The sanctity of human life.* This subject is suggested by the fact that they cast out the very wheat into the sea, being willing to lose everything if they could only save dear life. "Skin after skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." There is no intenser passion in the creature than the desire to preserve life. Not the tiniest insect, not the gentlest animal, but holds life most dear, and will do battle for it to the very last. The foe that man most dreads, all earthly creatures dread. God does not permit us to see anywhere around us life that is not valued, and for the sake of which all else will not be sacrificed. Man can do everything but die. Man can calmly lose everything but his life. Circumstances the most wretched, pains the most violent, desolation the most complete, can all be borne rather than life should be lost. Poor men cling to life as much as do rich men. Ignorant men hold life as tightly as do wise men. Young men value life no more highly than do old men. Well does the poet say, "All men think all men mortal but themselves, themselves immortal." Now, why has God made life thus sacred, and implanted such an instinct for the preservation of life in our nature?

I. TO ACCOMPLISH GOD'S PURPOSE THE TIME OF EACH MAN'S LIFE MUST BE IN HIS OWN HANDS. Life is a probation for us all, and one man requires a longer probation than another. One lad may be fitted for the business of life with four years' apprenticeship, while another may require six years. So it is in our schooling for eternity. God must hold in his hand both the incomings and the outgoings of our life. Some end life almost as soon as it is begun, while others drag wearily through their seventy or eighty years. And yet man has the power of taking away his life at any moment. God has, indeed, hidden away all the vital parts of our frame in secret places: covered the brain with bone and hair; set the arteries deep down beneath the flesh, and preserved the lungs and heart within a bony cage. Nevertheless, man can easily reach and spill his life. The poor suicide finds easy entrance into the secret chambers where his life dwells. It would almost seem that, if the entrance of life is in God's hands, the exit of it is in man's. And yet it must not be so. For man's own sake it must not. But how shall man's hand be guarded from touching his own life? God has done it by simply making the love of life the one master instinct in every man. He has also done it by revelation and by law, declaring, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." But, more important than any merely outward revelation is the inward revelation found in the clinging of the creature to its existence, so that, until the brain reels and self-control is lost, man will bear anything and lose anything rather than die. So God alone knows the appointed time for man on the earth, and he can accomplish in each his purposes of grace.

II. THE ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF SOCIETY COULD NOT BE MAINTAINED IF MEN HAD UNLIMITED CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LIVES. Consider how the reasons which now induce men to take their lives would then be multiplied. For the smallest things, a little over-anxiety, a little unusual trouble, a commonplace vexation, slighted love, or unsuccessful effort, men would be destroying themselves. We think life is sadly

full of change now that, at God's bidding, homes are here and there broken up, and hearts are rifled. But what would be the uncertainties and the crowded miseries of this world's story, if men were unchecked by this universal feeling of the sanctity of life? Widows moan, and orphans weep, and homes are desolated now; but *then*—if life were felt to be without value, and might be flung away for trifles—then, everywhere men would walk amidst ruins, fallen pillars, broken carvings, shattered roofs, scarce one stone upon another, and the wretched remnant would soon cry out of its desolation that God would seal again the sanctity of life.

III. BUT FOR THIS INSTINCT OF LIFE, MAN WOULD HAVE NO IMPULSE TO TOIL. We know that toil is necessary for the well-being of every creature; that Adam had to till the garden of Eden in the days of his purity and innocence. We know that the judgment on sinning man, that "he should eat bread at the sweat of his face," was no mere punishment, but the indication of the process by which he should be recovered to goodness. We know that through work moral character is cultivated, that alike the common necessities and the higher training of human nature demand toil. We must work if we would *eat*. We must work if we would *know*. We must work if we would be "meetened for the inheritance of the saints in the light." Yet who would work if there were not this instinct of life? What motive would be left sufficient to urge us to earnest endeavours, and to the mastering of difficulties? Though men do not say it to themselves in so many words, their real reason for working is that they must live, they want to live, they cling to life, they will do and bear anything if only they may, as we say, "keep body and soul together."

IV. THIS INSTINCT OF LIFE IS THE MEANS OF PRESERVING US FROM THE LAWLESS AND THE VIOLENT. That clinging to my own makes me jealous of my brother's life. As I would not imperil my own, so I would not endanger his. Let him be in the waters or in the fires, we would do our utmost to save his life. But suppose there was no such instinct; suppose life were of no higher value than property,—then we should be at the mercy of every lawless, vicious man, who would not hesitate to kill us for our purse. Every robbery would be liable to become a murder, a robbery with violence. But now, even in the soul of the thief and the vicious man is this impress of the sacredness of life, and only at the utmost extremity will they dare to take it. We may therefore bless God for this universal instinct, recognizing its importance in the economy of this world. We may be comforted, as Christians, when we find it so strong within us as to make us even dread death. It is better for the race, it is better for all, that this should be a mastering instinct; and we may be willing to bear a seeming disability which is so evidently for the good of the many.—R. T.

Ver. 44.—*Safety at last, somehow.* Luke succeeds in presenting a very vivid picture of the exciting scene, when he says, "And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land." St. Paul gave orders that "every one who could swim should first fling himself overboard, and get to land. The rest seized hold of planks and other fragments of the fast-dissolving wreck. The wind threw them landwards, and at last, by the aid of the swimmers, all were saved." St. Paul was probably one of the swimmers, and we may be quite sure one of the most active in helping the others. We may find in this thrilling scene, and in the various experiences of such a time, a picture of the getting home to God at last of human souls.

I. SOME GET HOME AS SHIPS THAT SAIL INTO HARBOUR AFTER A SUCCESSFUL VOYAGE. Somewhat bruised and battered, indeed, by the wild winds and the stormy seas, but whole and sound, and with sails all set, and ropes trimmed with flags, and shouts of joyous welcome from the shores. And thus all God's redeemed children ought to go home to him, and would go home, if in the voyage and the storms of life they fully trusted and fully used his offered grace. There ought to be for us all "the abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom."

II. SOME GET HOME AS SHIPWRECKED MARINERS COME ASHORE. With life hardly saved. With all the works of the life abandoned and lost, like a shipwrecked vessel. Illustrate cases of Christian lives in which the conflict against sin has not been maintained, and the poor soul is almost lost; or cases in which the frailties and easy besetments are unmastered to the end; or cases in which intellectual doubts spoil

Christian faith up to the very hour of passing; or cases in which the passion for luxury and worldliness and pleasures give a wrong tone to Christian conduct all through life;—all such cases may coincide with a genuine and saving faith in God, but in all such cases the home-coming is sadly like the picture of the strugglers for dear life given in our text. St. Paul presents the same thought under another figure. He speaks of some as “saved, yet so as by fire.” In the great testing-day, every man’s life-work is to be “tried by fire, of what sort it is.” Some will find their life-work, in which they had so prided themselves, prove nothing but wood and hay and stubble. It will all burn up, and burn away, if God can find nothing but self-seeking and self-serving in it, and the poor soul will enter into life like one plucked naked from a burning house. Surely if we magnify the exceeding grace which permits us all to reach safe home at last, we may well long and pray and strive to win our way to heaven and God with all sails set, bringing safely in the full cargo of a life of good works, done in a good spirit, under Divine leadings. Such a cargo as God may make to “enrich the markets of the golden year.”—R. T.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ver. 1.—*We for they*, A.V. and T.R. (twice). Was called. It reads as if it was the answer to their question to the natives, “What is this island called?” *Melita*. That *Melita* is the island of *Malta*, and not *Meleda* off the coast of Dalmatia, is demonstrated in Smith’s ‘Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul,’ and it is not worth while here to consider the arguments in favour of *Meleda*. *Melita* appears to be a Phœnician name, from the root in Hebrew מלט, to escape (Bochart, ‘Canaan,’ i. 26), meaning, therefore, a “refuge,” a harbour of refuge,<sup>1</sup> so called from sailors often running into Valetta during a gale; or possibly from *ḥay*, clay, in Italian *malta*, from the clay which forms the bottom of the sea as you approach Malta, and which makes the anchorage so safe. It was originally colonized by Phœnicians, whether from Tyre or Carthage cannot be pronounced with certainty, though we know it was a Carthaginian possession at the time of the first Punic War. It fell into the hands of the Romans B.C. 218, and at the time of St. Paul’s shipwreck was annexed to the province of Sicily. The population, however, was Phœnician or Punic, and probably knew little Greek or Latin. The name of a fountain in St. Paul’s Bay, *Ayn tal Razzul*, “The Apostle’s Fountain,” is said

<sup>1</sup> In the article “*Melita*,” in the ‘Dict. of Greek and Roman Geog.,’ the writer describes it casually as “a harbour of refuge” for Phœnician mariners. Diodorus Siculus, quoted by Gesenius (‘Monument. Phœnic.’ pars prima, p. 92) says that the Phœnicians had Malta for a *καταφυγή*, a refuge, in their voyages to the Atlantic, on account of its having good harbours.

(Smith, p. 24) to be Phœnician. But this is extremely doubtful. It is far more probably, not to say certainly, the corrupt Africano-Arabic dialect of the island, as I venture to affirm on the high authority of Professor Wright. Gesenius is also distinctly of opinion that there are no remains of Phœnician in the Maltese, and that all the words in the Maltese language which have been thought to be Phœnician are really Arabic. Four genuine Phœnician inscriptions have, however, been found in the island (‘Monument. Phœnic.’ pars prima, pp. 90—111, 252, and 341).

Ver. 2.—*Barbarians for barbarous people*, A.V.; *common for little*, A.V.; *all for every one*, A.V. Barbarians; i.e. not Greeks or Romans, or (in the mouth of a Jew) not Jews. The phrase had especial reference to the strange language of the “barbarian.” See St. Paul’s use of it (Rom. i. 14; 1 Cor. xiv. 11; Col. iii. 11); and compare Ovid’s saying (‘Trist.’ iii. 10, 37), “*Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulli*,” and that of Herodotus (ii. 158), that the Egyptians call all *barbarians* who do not speak the Egyptian language (Kuinoel). The word is thought to be formed onomatopœtically, to express the confused sound which a strange language has in a man’s ears. Kindness; *φιλανθρωπία*, here and Titus iii. 4 (comp. ch. xxvii. 3). Received us all. The whole party, numbering two hundred and seventy-six. The present rain, and . . . cold; showing that the gale still continued, and the wind was still north-east. The plight of the shipwrecked party must have been lamentable, drenched to the skin, with no change of clothes, a cold wind blowing. Probably the hearty meal they had taken on board ship was the means of saving their lives.

Ver. 3.—*But for and*, A.V.; *a viper came*



for there came a viper, A.V.; by reason of for out of, A.V. Had gathered; συστρέψαντος, only here and in the LXX. of Judg. xi. 3 and xii. 4, for "to collect," "gather together." But συστρεφή (ch. xix. 40; xxiii. 12) means "a concourse," "a conspiracy." In classical Greek συστρέφειν is "to twist up together," to "form into a compact body," and the like. A bundle of sticks; φρυγάνων πλῆθος. The word only occurs in the New Testament here; it means "dry sticks," "kindlers," any combustible material. In the LXX. it is used as the equivalent of σπ, straw or stubble (Isa. xl. 24; xli. 2, etc.), and for "nettles" (Job xxx. 7). Theophrastus seems to use it for plants smaller than a shrub ('Hist.' Plant., i. 3, 1, quoted by Hobart). Lewin (vol. ii. p. 208) writes as follows:—"When in Malta in 1853, I went to St. Paul's Bay at the same season of the year as when the wreck occurred. . . . We noticed eight or nine stacks of small faggots. . . . They consisted of a kind of thorny heather, and had evidently been cut for firewood." This is a conclusive answer, if any were needed, to the objection to Melita being Malta, drawn from the absence of wood in the island. But besides this, it is not a fact that even now there is no wood at all (see Lewin). A viper came out. It is objected that there are no vipers in Malta. But it is obvious that the condition of Malta now, a very thickly inhabited island (one thousand two hundred people to the square mile, Lewin, p. 208), is very different from what it was with a sparse population in the days of St. Paul. Vipers may well have been destroyed during one thousand eight hundred and sixty years. Lewin mentions that his travelling companions in 1853 started what they thought was a viper, which escaped into one of the bundles of heather. Came out. διεξελοῦσα is the reading of Tischendorf, Alford, Meyer, etc., "came out through the sticks." It is a frequent medical term. The heat; τῆς θερμῆς. This form of the word is only used here in the New Testament, instead of the more common θερμότης. It occurs, however, repeatedly in the LXX. (Job vi. 17; Ps xix. 7; Eccles. xxxviii. 34, etc.), and was the usual medical word for feverish heat. Fastened; κάθηψε, here only in the Bible; but not uncommon in classical Greek, and of general use among medical writers.

Ver. 4.—Beast for venomous beast, A.V.; hanging from for hang on, A.V.; one to another for among themselves, A.V.; escaped from for escaped, A.V.; justice for vengeance, A.V.; hath not suffered for suffereth not, A.V. The beast (τὸ θῆριον). It is peculiar to medical writers to use θῆριον as synonymous with χιῶνα, a viper. So also θηριόδηκτος, bit by a viper. θηριακή, an antidote to the

bite of a viper (Dioscorides, Galen, etc.). Justice (ἡ Δίκη). In Greek mythology Dice (Justitia) was the daughter and assessor of Zeus, and the avenger of crime. In her train was Poena, of whom Horace says, "Raro antecedentem scelestum Deseruit pede Poena claudo" ('Od.', iii. 2, 32). "The idea of Dice as justice personified is most perfectly developed in the dramas of Sophocles and Euripides" (article "Dice," in 'Dict. of Greek and Roman Biog. and Mythol.'). It does not appear whether the islanders had learned the name and office of Dice from the Greeks in Sicily, or whether they had any native divinity whose name St. Luke translates into that of Dice. The gods whose names are found in ancient Maltese inscriptions are Melkarth, another name of Hercules, the tutelary god of Tyre; Osiris, and Baal. Other Phœnician divinities are named in the Carthaginian inscriptions (see Gesenius, 'Monument. Phœnic.'). Hath not suffered. They assume that death will certainly follow from the bite.

Ver. 5.—Howbeit for and, A.V.; took for felt, A.V.

Ver. 6.—But they expected that he would for howbeit, they looked when he should, A.V.; when they were long in expectation for after they had looked a great while, A.V.; beheld nothing amiss for saw no harm, A.V. They expected; προσεδόκων. This word is used eleven times by St. Luke, twice by St. Matthew, and three times in the Second Epistle of Peter (see ch. iii. 5; Luke i. 21, etc.). It is also common in the LXX. But it is a word much employed by medical writers in speaking of the course they expect a disease to take, and the results they look for. And this is the more remarkable here because there are no fewer than three other medical phrases in this verse, πίμπρασθαι, καταπίπτειν, and μηδὲν ἄπονον, besides those immediately preceding διεξελοῦσθαι (according to several good manuscripts and editions) θέρμη, καθάπτειν, and θηρίον. So that it looks as if, having once got into a medical train of thought from the subject he was writing about, medical language naturally came uppermost in his mind. Have swollen; πίμπρασθαι, only here in the Bible, and not found in this sense in older classical writers. But it is the usual medical word for "inflammation" in any part of the body. Fallen down; καταπίπτειν, only here and in ch. xxvi. 14, and twice in the LXX.; but common in Homer and elsewhere, and especially frequent in medical writers of persons falling down in fits, or weakness, or wounded, or the like. Nothing amiss (μηδὲν ἄπονον). Mr. Hobart quotes a remarkable parallel to this phrase from Damocritus, quoted by Galen. He says that whosoever, having been bitten by a mad dog, drinks a certain anti-

dote (eis oddēn akopon ēmpeśoutai rādōws), "shall suffer no harm." It is used in medical writers in two senses—of "unusual symptoms," and of fatal consequences. In the New Testament it only occurs elsewhere in Luke xxiii. 41, "Nothing amiss;" and 2 Thess. iii. 2, Ἀτόπων καὶ πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων. It is also used in the LXX. for wickedness, doing wickedly, etc. They changed their minds; as in an opposite direction the Lycanians did (ch. xiv. 11, 19). It is a graphic picture of the fickleness of an untutored mind yielding to every impulse. The impunity with which St. Paul endured the bite of the viper was a direct fulfilment of our Lord's promise in Mark xvi. 18 (see further note on ver. 8).

Ver. 7.—*Now in the neighbourhood of that place for in the same quarters, A.V.; lands belonging to for possessions of, A.V.; named for whose name was, A.V.; entertained for lodged, A.V. Lands (χωρία); so John iv. 5; ch. i. 18, 19; iv. 34; v. 3, 8. The chief man of the island (τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου). It appears that, with his usual accurate knowledge gained on the spot (see ch. xvi. 22, note), St. Luke here gives to Publius his peculiar official title of *primus*. For Ciantar (i. 215), quoted by Smith, gives a Greek inscription on a marble, which in his day was standing near the gates of Citta Vecchia, in Malta, in which are the words, Προδυνεῖς Ἰππενυ Ρωμ' πρώτος Μελιταίων, κ.τ.λ., "Prudens, a Roman knight, chief of the Maltese." The Latin inscription, which was discovered in 1747, has the same title, MEL PRIMUS. "chief of the Maltese." It may not improbably be the Greek and Latin translation of the old Phœnician title of the "headman," in Hebrew שׂרָא, in Chaldee שׂרָא, as in the title הַרְחֵל הַשָּׂרָא, the chief of the Captivity. When the Romans succeeded the Carthaginians in the possession of the island, they would be likely to perpetuate the title of the chief magistrate. In this case the chief was also a Roman, as his name of Publius indicates. Alford says that he was *legatus* to the Prætor of Sicily, and so 'Speaker's Commentary,' Kuinoel, Meyer, etc. Received us; ἀναδεξιόμενος, only here (and Heb. xi. 17 in a different sense) for the more common ὑποδέχομαι. Kuinoel quotes from Ælian, 'Var. Hist.,' 4, 19, the similar phrase, Ἐπέδεξατο αὐτοὺς . . . φιλοφρόνως; and from 2 Macc. iii. 9, Φιλοφρόνως ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως ὑποδεχθεῖς. Entertained us (ἐξέτισεν); see ch. x. 6, 18, 23, 32; xxi. 16; and in the active voice in Heb. xiii. 2. Courteously; φιλοφρόνως, only here in the New Testament, but we find φιλόφρων, courteous, in 1 Pet. iii. 8. We must understand the "us" probably to include the centurion, St. Paul, St. Luke, Aristarchus, and possibly one or two others, but not the whole two*

hundred and seventy-six. Heb. xiii. 2 had a striking fulfilment here. During the three days they would have opportunity to procure suitable winter quarters.

Ver. 8.—*It was so for it came to pass, A.V.; fever for a fever, A.V.; dysentery for of a bloody flux, A.V.; unto for to, A.V.; and laying, etc., healed for and laid, etc., and healed, A.V. The father of Publius. The fact of the father of Publius being alive and living in Malta is a further indication that the term ὁ πρῶτος τῆς νήσου is an official title. Lay sick. Συνέχεσθαι is also the usual medical expression for being taken sick of any disease (see the numerous passages quoted by Hobart, pp. 3, 4, from Galen and Hippocrates). It is used by St. Luke, with πυρετῷ (Luke iv. 38), and in the same sense in Matt. iv. 24. Lay. Κατακείσθαι is used especially of lying in bed from sickness (see Mark i. 30; ii. 4; Luke v. 25; ch. ix. 33). It answers to *decumbo* in Latin. Sick of fever and dysentery (πυρετοῖς καὶ δυσεντερίᾳ συνεχόμενον). The terms here used are all professional ones. Πυρετός, in the plural, is of frequent occurrence in Hippocrates, Aretæus, and Galen, but elsewhere in the New Testament always in the singular; δυσεντερία, only found here in the New Testament, is the regular technical word for a "dysentery," and is frequently in medical writers coupled with πυρετοί or πυρετός, as indicating different stages of the same illness. Laying his hands on him. So Mark xvi. 18, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (see also Matt. ix. 18; xix. 13, 15; Mark v. 23; vi. 5; vii. 32; viii. 23, 25; Luke iv. 40; xiii. 13; ch. ix. 12). It is also spoken of as an accompaniment of prayer in confirmation, ordination, etc. It has been remarked as curious that the two actions of taking up serpents and healing the sick by the laying on of hands should be in such close juxtaposition both here and in Mark xvi. 18. It suggests the thought whether Luke had seen the passage in St. Mark; or whether the writer of Mark xvi. 18 had seen ch. xxviii. 8. Or is the coincidence accidental, arising out of the facts?*

Ver. 9.—*And for so, A.V. and T.R.; the rest for others, A.V.; cured for healed, A.V.*

Ver. 10.—*Sailed for departed, A.V.; put on board for laded us with, A.V.; we needed for were necessary, A.V. Honoured us with many honours. Kuinoel understands this in the sense of "gifts," "presents," which of course their destitute condition, after losing all they had in the shipwreck, would make very acceptable. But there is nothing in the words to suggest this meaning, and, had it been so, Luke would have simply stated it, as he does immediately afterwards, when he says that they put on board such things as we*

needed. When we sailed (*ἀναγομένους*); see ch. xiii. 13; xvi. 11; xviii. 21; xx. 3, 13; xxi. 1, 2, 4, 12, 21, and notes. It is touching to see the kindness of the Maltese, and we may hope that they had to thank God for light and grace and life through the ministry of St. Paul and his companions.

Ver. 11.—*Set sail for departed, A.V.; island for isle, A.V.; The Twin Brothers for Castor and Pollux, A.V.* After three months. At the very earliest period when the sailing season began after the winter. It would be, perhaps, about the middle of February, or, as Alford thinks, about March 10. If the weather was fine, having so short a voyage before them, they would venture to sail without further delay. Set sail (see preceding verse, note). A ship of Alexandria. Some ship, better fated than that one (ch. xxvii. 6) which was wrecked in St. Paul's Bay, which had weathered or avoided the gale, and probably got into the harbour of Valetta in good time. One would have thought that this ship wintering at Malta on its way from Alexandria to Italy, *viâ* Sicily, would be of itself a sufficient proof that Melita was Malta. Which had wintered (*παρὰ χειμάκοντι*); see ch. xxvii. 12, note. Whose sign was The Twin Brothers (*Διδασκουροι*, in Latin the constellation *Gemini*). The twin sons of Jupiter and Leda, Castor and Pollux, brothers of Helena ("fratres Helenæ, lucida sidera." Horace, "Od., i. 3, 2), were called by the Greeks *Dioscuri*, the sons of Jove. It was their special office to assist sailors in danger of shipwreck. Hence Horace, in the ode just quoted, prays that Castor and Pollux, in conjunction with other deities, would carry the ship in which Virgil sailed safe to Attica. And in Ode xii. 27, etc., he describes the subsidence of the storm, and the calming of the waves, at the appearance of the twin stars, of Leda's sons. It was, therefore, very natural to have the *Dioscuri* for the *παράσημον*, the sign of the ship. Every ancient ship had a *παράσημον*, "a painted or carved representation of the sign which furnished its name on the prow, and at the stern a similar one of their tutelary deity" (Alford), which was called the *tutela*. These were sometimes the same, and perhaps were so in this instance. Ovid tells us that Minerva was the *tutela* of the ship in which he sailed, and that her painted helmet gave it its name ('Trist.,' l. ix. 1), Galea, or the like. We may notice the continual trial to Jews and Christians of having to face idolatry in all the common actions of life.

Ver. 12.—*Touching for landing, A.V.* Touching (*καταχθέντες*); ch. xxi. 3; xxvii. 3, note. The way in which Syracuse is here mentioned is another redundant proof that Melita is Malta. "Syracuse is about eighty miles, a days' sail, from Malta" (Alford).

Tarried there three days. Perhaps wind-bound, or possibly having to land part of their cargo there.

Ver. 13.—*Made a circuit for fetched a compass, A.V.; arrived at for came to, A.V.; a south for the south, A.V.; sprang up for blew, A.V.; on the second day we came for we came the next day, A.V.* We made a circuit; *περιελθόντες*. St. Luke only uses this word in one other passage, ch. xix. 13, "The strolling [or, 'vagabond'] Jews;" and it has the same sense of "wandering" in the only other passages where it occurs in the New Testament (1 Tim. v. 13; Heb. xi. 37). If it is the right reading here, the meaning must be "tacking," the wind not allowing them to sail in a direct course. "I am inclined to suppose that the wind was north-west, and that they worked to windward, availing themselves of the sinuosities of the coast. But with this wind they could not proceed through the Straits of Messina. . . . They were, therefore, obliged to put into Rhgium. . . . But after one day the wind became fair (from the south), and on the following day they arrived at Puteoli, having accomplished about one hundred and eighty nautical miles in less than two days" (Smith, p. 156). But Meyer explains it, "after we had come round," viz. from Syracuse, round the eastern coast of Sicily. Lewin thinks they had to stand out to sea to catch the wind, and so arrived at Rhegium by a circuitous course. The other reading is *περιελόντες*, as in ch. xxvii. 40; but this seems to give no proper sense here. A south wind sprang up. The force of the preposition in *ἐπιγεγομένου* shows that there was a change of wind. The south wind would, of course, be a very favourable one for sailing from Reggio to Puzzuoli. Hobart remarks of *ἐπιγίνεσθαι* (which is also found in ch. xxvii. 27, according to some good manuscripts) that it "was a favourite medical word constantly employed to denote the coming on of an attack of illness." It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but is common in Diodorus Siculus, Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides, etc., for the coming on of a storm, wind (adverse or favourable), or any other change. On the second day; *δευτεροῖς*. This particular numeral occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but the analogous *τεταρταῖος* is used in John xi. 39. And Herodotus has *τριταῖος ἀφίκετο*, "he went away on the third day." *Τριταῖος* is also common in medical writers with *πυρετός*, a tertian ague, a fever that recurs on the third day; *τεταρταῖος*, a quartan fever; *πενταῖος*, one recurring on the fifth day; *ἑβδομαῖος*, on the seventh day; *ἐνναταῖος*, on the ninth day. The forms *δεκαταῖος*, *πεντηκοσταῖος*, etc., "doing anything on the tenth, the fiftieth day," also occur. Puteoli; now *Puzzuoli*. The Italian port to



which ships from Alexandria usually came. Smith quotes a passage from Seneca (Epist., 77) describing the arrival of the Alexandrian wheat-ships at Puteoli. The whole population of Puteoli went out to see them sail into harbour with their topsails (*supparum*), which they alone were allowed to carry, in order to hasten their arrival (p. 157), so important to Italy was the corn trade with Alexandria.

Ver. 14.—*Intreated for desired*, A.V.; *came to for went toward*, A.V. Brethren. It is very interesting to find the gospel already planted in Italy. The circumstances of Puteoli as the great emporium of African wheat made it a likely place for Christianity to reach, whether from Rome or from Alexandria (see ch. xviii. 24). Luke calls them ἀδελφοί, not Χριστιανοί (ch. xi. 26). Perhaps the name of *Christian* was still rather the name given by those without, and that of “brethren,” or “disciples,” the name used by the Christians among themselves. What a joy it must have been to Paul and his companions to find themselves among brethren! Seven days. Surely that they might take part in the service and worship of the next Sunday (see ch. xx. 6, 7). It is implied that the philanthropy of Julius (ch. xxvii. 3) did not now fail. So we came to Rome. The R.V. is undoubtedly right. We can trace in the anticipatory form of speech here used by St. Luke, simple as the words are, his deep sense of the transcendent interest of the arrival of the apostle of the Gentiles at the colossal capital of the heathen world. Yes; after all the conspiracies of the Jews who sought to take away his life, after the two years’ delay at Cæsarea, after the perils of that terrible shipwreck, in spite of the counsel of the soldiers to kill the prisoners, and in spite of the “venomous beast,”—Paul came to Rome. The word of God, “Thou must bear witness also at Rome” (ch. xxiii. 11), had triumphed over all “the power of the enemy” (Luke x. 19). And doubtless the hearts both of Paul and Luke beat quicker when they first caught sight of the city on the seven hills.

Ver. 15.—*The brethren, when, etc., came for when the brethren, etc., they came*, A.V.; *The Market of Appius for Appii forum*, A.V. The brethren, when they heard of us. During the seven days’ stay at Puteoli, the news of the arrival of the illustrious confessors reached the Church at Rome. The writer of that wonderful Epistle which they had received some three years before, and in which he had expressed his earnest desire to visit them, and his hope that he should come to them in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ (Rom. i. 11, 12, 15; xv. 22, 24, 28—32), was now almost at their gates as a prisoner of state, and they would

soon see him face to face. They naturally determined to go and meet him, to honour him as an apostle, and show their love to him as a brother. The younger and more active would go as far as Appii Forum, “a village on the Via Appia, forty-three miles from Rome” (Meyer). The rest only came as far as The Three Taverns, ten miles nearer to Rome. Alford quotes a passage from Cicero’s letters to Atticus (ii. 10), in which he mentions both “Appii Forum” and the “Tres Tabernæ;” and refers to Josephus (‘Ant. Jud.’ xvii. xii. 1) for a similar account of Jews at Rome, who, on hearing of the arrival of the pretended Alexander at Puteoli, went out in a body to meet him (πᾶν τὸ Ἰουδαίων πλῆθος ὑπαντίδοντες ἐξήλθαν). He also quotes from Suetonius the passage in which he tells us that, on Caligula’s return from Germany, “populi Romani sexum, ætatem, ordinem omnem, usque ad Vicesimum lapidem effudisse se” (‘Calig.’ c. 4). Appii Forum was not far from the coast, and was a great place for sailors and innkeepers (Horace, ‘Sat.’ i. 5, 3). The Via Appia was made by Appius Claudius, B.C. 442. It led from the Porta Capena in Rome through the Pontine marshes to Capua.

Ver. 16.—*Entered into for came to*, A.V. and T.R.; the words which follow in the T.R. and the A.V., *the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard*; but are omitted in the B.T. and R.V., following α, A, B, and many versions, Alford retains them, Meyer speaks doubtfully; *abide for dwell*, A.V.; *the soldier that guarded him for a soldier that kept him*, A.V. The captain of the guard (A.V.); τῷ στρατοπέδῳ: in Latin *præfectus prætorio* (Στρατοπέδον was the Greek name for the *castra prætoriana*). There were usually two great officers so called, and it was their special duty to take charge of prisoners sent from the provinces to be tried at Rome. ‘Vinctus mitti ad præfectos prætorii mei debet’ (Pliny, ‘Epist.’, x. 65). It has been argued, from the mention of “the captain of the guard,” that Paul’s imprisonment must have occurred when Burrus was sole prefect, as related by Tacitus (‘Annal.’ xii. 42, 1), and that hence we get a precise date for it (so Wieseler, ‘Chronologie de Apostolisch. Geschichte’). But this can hardly be depended upon. Luke might speak of “the prefect,” meaning the one to whom the prisoners were actually committed, just as we might speak of a magistrate writing to “the secretary of state,” or an ambassador calling upon “the secretary of state,” the matter in hand determining which of the three secretaries we meant. With the soldier that guarded him. It appears from ver. 20 that St. Paul was subjected to the

*custodia militaris*, i.e. that he was fastened by a single chain to a prætorian (στρατιώτης), but, as a special favour, granted probably on the good report of the courteous Julius, was allowed to dwell in his own hired house (ver. 30); see ch. xxiv. 23.

Ver. 17.—*He for Paul, A.V. and T.R.; called together those that were the chief for called the chief . . . together, A.V.; I, brethren, though I had done for men and brethren, though I have committed, A.V. and T.R.; the customs for customs, A.V.; was I for was, A.V.* After three days. He could but just have got into his hired house, but he would not lose a day in seeking out his brethren to speak to them of the hope of Israel. What marvellous activity! what unquenchable love! The chief (τοὺς ὄντας . . . πρώτους). The expression οἱ πρώτοι, for the principal people of the district or neighbourhood, occurs repeatedly in Josephus. The Jews. They had returned to Rome, after their banishment by Claudius (ch. xviii. 2), some time before this (Rom. xvi. 3, 7). I had done nothing against the people, or the customs (comp. ch. xxiii. 1, 6; xxiv. 14—16, 20, 21; xxv. 8; xxvi. 6, 7, 22, 23).

Ver. 18.—*Desired to set me at liberty for would have let me go, A.V.* Had examined me (ἀνακρίναντές με); see ch. iv. 9; xii. 19; xxiv. 8; xxv. 26. Desired to set me at liberty (see ch. xxv. 18, 19, 25; xxvi. 31, 32).

Ver. 19.—*When the Jews spake against it.* This is a detail not expressly mentioned in the direct narrative in ch. xxv., but which makes that narrative clearer. It shows us that Festus's proposal in ch. xxv. 9 was made in consequence of the opposition of the Jews to the acquittal which he was disposed to pronounce. I was constrained to appeal. Nothing can be more delicate, more conciliatory, or more truly patriotic than Paul's manner of addressing the Jews. Himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews, devoted to his kinsmen according to the flesh, never even putting forward his own privilege as a Roman citizen till the last necessity, he shows himself the constant friend of his own people in spite of all their ill usage. Undazzled by the splendour of Rome and the power of the Roman people, his heart is with his own despised nation, "that they might be saved." He wishes to be well with them; he wants them to understand his position; he speaks to them as a kinsman and a brother. His appeal to Cæsar had been of necessity—to save his life. But he was not going to accuse his brethren before the dominant race. His first desire was that they should be his friends, and share with him the hope of the gospel of Christ.

Ver. 20.—*Did I intreat you to see and to*

*see with me for have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you, A.V.; for because of for because that for, A.V.* To see and to speak with me. Meyer, followed by Alford, rightly prefers the rendering of the A.V. and the margin of the R.V. Παρακαλέω is here in its primary sense of calling any one to come to you, and the two infinitives express the object for which he called them, viz. to see and speak with them. Because of the hope of Israel (see ch. xxiii. 6; xxiv. 14, 15, 21; xxvi. 6, 22, 23). I am bound with this chain (περικείμεναι). In Mark ix. 42 and Luke xvii. 2 the millstone "hangs about" (περικείται) the neck. But here and Heb. v. 2 the construction is different, and the subject and the object are reversed. Instead of the chain encompassing Paul, Paul is said to be bound with the chain. (For the chain, see ver. 16, note, and ch. xxiv. 23.) The force of this saying seems to be this, "I have asked you to come to me because this chain which binds me is not a token of a renegade Israelite who has come to Rome to accuse his nation before the heathen master, but of a faithful Israelite, who has endured bondage rather than forsake the hope of his fathers."

Ver. 21.—*From for out of, A.V.; nor neither, A.V.; did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak for any of the brethren that came showed or spake, A.V.* Nor did any of the brethren come hither, etc. This is no improvement on the A.V.; for it implies that they denied that any special messenger had been sent to speak harm of Paul, which nobody could have thought had been done. What they meant to say is exactly what the A.V. makes them say, viz. that, neither by special letters, nor by message nor casual information brought by Jews coming to Rome from Judæa, had they heard any harm of him. This seems odd; but as the Jews had no apparent motive for not speaking the truth, we must accept it as true. The expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius (ch. xviii. 1) may have slackened the intercourse between Judæa and Rome; the attention of the Jews may have been absorbed by their accusation of Felix; there had been a very short interval between Paul's appeal and his departure for Rome; he had only been at Rome three days, and so it is very possible that no report had yet reached Rome concerning him at this early season of the year.

Ver. 22.—*It is known to us for we know, A.V.* We desire (ἄξιούμεν); or, we are willing—literally, think it right (so ch. xvi. 38). Ἡξιούω, followed by a negative, means "was unwilling." It has this sense frequently in Xenophon, Ælian, Josephus, and other Greek writers (see Kuinoel, on ch. xvi. 30). This sect (τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης); see ch. xxiv. 5.

14, notes. It is known to us; *i.e.* though we have heard nothing against you Paul, we have heard of the sect of the Nazarenes and have heard nothing but harm concerning it. Spoken against (*ἀντιλέγεται*); see ch. xiii. 45; ver. 19; Rom. x. 21; Titus i. 9. It is called a "superstitio prava, malefica, ex-itiabilis" (Pliny, 'Ep.,' x. 96; Suetonius, 'Nero,' 16; Tacitus, 'Annal.,' xv. 44; 'Speaker's Commentary').

Ver. 23.—*They came to him into his lodging in great number for there came many to him into his lodging, A.V.; expounded the matter for expounded, A.V.; testifying for and testified, A.V.; and persuading for persuading, A.V.; from for out of (twice), A.V.* His lodging; *ἐντα*, elsewhere only in Philem. 22. It may well be the same as the "hired dwelling" in ver. 30. Expounded (*ἐξέτιθετο*). The verb governs the accusative *τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, as in ch. xviii. 26, and is not intransitive, as in ch. xi. 4. Testifying; *διαμαρτυρούμενος*, a favourite word of St. Luke's, most commonly intransitive, and so to be taken here. It qualifies the verb (see Luke xvi. 28; ch. ii. 40; viii. 25; x. 42; xx. 23; xxiii. 11). It is transitive in ch. xx. 21, 24; doubtful in ch. xviii. 5. The kingdom of God. The great subject-matter of the gospel in all its parts—grace, righteousness, glory, through Jesus Christ (see ver. 31 and ch. xx. 25). From the Law of Moses and from the prophets (see Luke xxiv. 27, 44). From morning till evening. So do the Jews frequent the houses of the missionaries to this day, and listen with great interest and apparent earnestness to their teaching.

Ver. 24.—*Disbelieved for believed not, A.V.* The usual division of the hearers of the Word.

Ver. 25.—*Isaiah for Esaias, A.V.; your for our, A.V. and T.R.* When they agreed not; *ἀσύμφωνοι ὄντες*, only here in the New Testament; but *συμφωνέω*, to agree, occurs repeatedly (Luke v. 36; ch. v. 9; xv. 15; and Matthew, *passim*); also *σύμφωνος* and *συμφώνησις* (1 Cor. vii. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 15). 'Ἀσύμφωνος occurs in Wisd. xviii. 10 and in classical writers. Probably the disagreement led to some altercation, and to the exhibition of the usual bigotry and prejudice and bitter opposition on the part of the unbelieving Jews. They departed; *ἀπελθόντες*, the proper word for the breaking up of an assembly (Matt. xiv. 15, 22, 23; xv. 32, 39; ch. xv. 30; xix. 41, etc.). Well spake the Holy Ghost. Note the distinct assertion of the inspiration of Isaiah. Compare the words of the Creed, "Who spake by the prophets;" and for similar statements, see Mark xii. 36; Heb. iii. 7; x. 15, etc. Note also how resolutely St. Paul maintains his own standpoint as the faithful and consistent Israelite in accord

with Moses and the prophets, while his adversaries, with their boasted zeal for the Law, were really its antagonists. The attitude of the true Catholics, in protesting against the corruptions and perversions of the Church of Rome, and showing that they are the faithful followers of Scripture and of apostolic tradition, and the true upholders of the primitive discipline and doctrine of the Church, is very similar.

Ver. 26.—*Go thou for go, A.V.; by hearing for hearing, A.V.; in no wise for not, A.V.; shall in no wise for not, A.V.* Go thou, etc. The quotation is all but *verbatim* from the LXX. of Isa. vi. 9, 10. This particular chapter was evidently deemed one of great importance, since our Lord quotes from it (Matt. xiii. 14, 15), and St. John (John xii. 37—41), as well as St. Paul in the passage before us. By hearing (*ἀκοῇ*). Why the LXX. translated *πῶς* by the substantive (*ἀκοῇ*) instead of by the participle (*ἀκούοντες*), as in the precisely similar phrase which follows—*βλέποντες, βλέψατε*—does not appear. The Hebrew reads, as it is rendered in the A.V., "Hear ye, . . . and see ye," etc., in the imperative mood, not differing much in sense (in prophetic language) from the future. It is impossible to give the force in English exactly of the repetition of the verb in the infinitive mood *πῶς ἤρᾳ*, and *ἰσῆ ἤρᾳ* by a very common Hebrew idiom. It is done imperfectly by the word "indeed." Rosenmüller quotes from Demosthenes ('Contr. Aristogit.,' i.) the proverbial saying, *Ὁρώντας μὴ ὀρᾶν, καὶ ἀκούοντας μὴ ἀκούειν*.

Ver. 27.—*This people's heart for the heart of this people, A.V.; they have for have they, A.V.; lest haply they should perceive for lest they should see, A.V.; turn again for be converted, A.V.* This people's heart, etc. So the LXX. But the Hebrew has the imperative form, "make fat," "make heavy," "shut," in the prophetic style (comp. Jer. i. 10). They have closed (*ἐκάμυσαν*). The verb *καμύνω*, contracted from *καταμύνω* (*μύνω*, to close, from the action of the lips in pronouncing the sound *μν*), means "to shut" or "close" the eyes. It is found repeatedly in the LXX., and, in the form *καταμύνω*, in classical writers. The word "mystery" is etymologically connected with it. The word here expresses the wilfulness of their unbelief: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life."

Ver. 28.—*This salvation for the salvation, A.V. and T.R.; they will also hear for and that they will hear it, A.V.* The A.V. gives the sense better than the R.V. This salvation; *τὸ σωτήριον*. This form, instead of the more common *σωτηρία*, is found in Luke ii. 30; iii. 6; and Eph. vi. 17. The Gentiles (see ch. xiii. 46; xviii. 6; xxii. 26; xxvi.



17, 20, 23). But even at Rome the apostle of the Gentiles was faithful to the rule, "To the Jew first."

Ver. 29 (A.V.).—This verse is entirely wanting in the R.T. and R.V. It is omitted in many good manuscripts and versions. It is condemned by Grotius, Mill, Tischendorf, Lachmann, and others; but is not absolutely rejected by Meyer, Alford, Plumptre, and others. Great reasoning (πολλὴν συζήτησιν); see ch. xv. 2, 7; and Luke xxii. 23; xxiv. 15; ch. vi 9; ix. 29. The phrase is in St. Luke's style, and the statement seems necessary to complete the narrative.

Ver. 30.—*He abode for Paul dwell*, A.V. and T.R.; *dwelling for house*, A.V.; *went for came*, A.V. Two whole years. *Διερία* occurs also in ch. xxiv. 27, and *διετής* in Matt. ii. 16; *τριετία* in ch. xx. 31. These forms are frequent in the LXX. His own hired dwelling; *ἰδίῳ μισθώματι*, only here. The word properly means "hire," the price paid for the use of anything, and then by metonymy "the thing which is hired." It occurs frequently in the LXX. in the sense of "hire" or "wages;" e.g. Hos. ii. 12; Deut. xxiii. 18, etc. This may be the *ξενία* spoken of in ver. 23, or he may have removed from thence into some house more commodious for gathering Jews and Christians around him.

Ver. 31.—*The things for those things*, A.V.; *concerning for which concern*, A.V.; *boldness for confidence*, A.V.; *none for no man*, A.V. Boldness (*παρρησίας*); see above, ch. ii. 29; iv. 13, 29, 31. The verb *παρρησιάζομαι* also occurs frequently (ch. ix. 27; xiii. 46; xiv. 3, etc.). The boldness and freedom with which he spake the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ would naturally increase more and more, as he found himself day by day unchecked by enemies, and encouraged by the number and earnestness of his hearers. None forbidding him; *ἀκωλύτως*, only here in the New Testament; but the adjective is found in Symmachus's version of Job (xxxiv. 31), and in the LXX. of Wisd. vii. 22; and both adjective and adverb are occasionally used in classical Greek. But the most common use of the adverb is by medical writers, who employ it "to denote freedom, unhindered action, in a variety of things, such as respiration, perspiration, the pulse, the muscles, the members of the body" (Hobart). In two passages quoted from Galen ('Meth. Med.' xiv. 15; 'Usus Part.' ii. 15) the sentence ends, as here, with the word *ἀκωλύτως*. Some derive the word "acolyte" hence, from their being admitted to holy functions, though not in full orders.

And so ends this lively and beautiful and most faithful sketch of one of the greatest men, and one of the greatest works, the world has ever seen. "In labours more

abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft," is seen, as we read this history, to be no empty boast, but a simple statement of the truth. The springs of that mind and of that zeal were ever ready to rise to fresh work, however crushing a strain had been put upon them. "I count not my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God," is the true description of that life as delineated by the beloved physician. And yet how remarkable it is that in the whole of the Acts there is not one single word of panegyric! The portraiture is a bare photograph, without a single additional touch to enhance its beauty. Nor must we forget the singular brevity with which some episodes are passed over. Had we only Luke's history, we should not know that the apostle was an author—an author whose writings have moved the world of mind and spirit more than all the writings of Plato, and Aristotle, and Cicero, and Bacon combined, through a period of eighteen hundred years. Thus, to glance at the "two whole years" with the record of which the book closes, think of the work done in that time. What gatherings of holy men and women within the walls of that "hired dwelling" are we sure must have taken place! Prisca and Aquila, and Epænetus, and Mary, and Urban, and Apelles, and Persis, and Hermas, and Olympas, and all their compeers, we may be sure were often there. What wrestlings in prayer, what expositions of the Scriptures, what descriptions of the kingdom of God, what loving exhortations, what sympathetic communings, must have made that "hired dwelling" a very Bethel in the stronghold of heathenism! We think of the prætorian soldiers to whom he was successively chained; perhaps of the courteous Julius; of the inmates of Nero's palace (Phil. iv. 22); perhaps of Eubulus, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia (2 Tim. iv. 21); of Epaphras and Epaphroditus, and of Luke, and Mark, and Timothy, and Aristarchus; and we know not how many more besides; and there rises before our minds a crowd of agencies and sober activities directed by that master mind to the advancement of the kingdom of God. We feel, indeed, that, though he was chained, "the word of God was not bound;" but that through the marvellous energy and unflinching wisdom of the great prisoner, his prison turned out rather to the furtherance of the gospel. And then we turn to the Epistles written at this time. What a contribution to the literature of the kingdom of heaven!—the Epistles to the Ephesians, to the Colos-

sions, to Philemon, and to the Philippians, and probably much help given to Luke in the composition of the Acts of the Apostles. Truly they were two years of infinite moment to the Church of God.

What followed those two years, what became of Paul, and what of his saintly biographer, we shall never know. It has pleased God to draw a curtain over the events, which we cannot penetrate. Here our history ends, because nothing more had

happened when it was given to the Church. Instead of vain regrets because it reaches no further, let us devoutly thank God for all that this book has taught us, and strive to show ourselves worthy members of that Gentile Church, whose foundation by St. Peter and St. Paul, and whose marvellous increment, through the labours of him who once laid it waste, has been so well set before us in the Book of THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—10.—*Kindness.* Genuine kindness is a pleasant thing to see by whomsoever and under whatsoever circumstances it is exercised. God has planted it in the human breast, and it is one of the distinctive attributes of man. Too often, indeed, the indulgence of bad passions is suffered to choke it, and rival interests to interfere with its action. Still, there it is, a faint reflection, it is true, of the love of God, but nevertheless a remnant of God's image in man; pleasant to behold, sweetening the relations of man with man, and capable, if allowed to exercise its rightful sway over human actions, of increasing to an almost infinite extent the happiness of the human race. Kindness shows itself, mainly, in two ways. First, in a general inclination to promote the well-being of others. But secondly and chiefly, in sentiments of sorrow and compassion for the misfortunes of others, and in active endeavours to relieve their sufferings and supply their wants. Such was the kindness of these simple Maltese peasants. They saw before them nearly three hundred persons in the extremest destitution. Houseless, without food, drenched with wet from the sea and from the rain, without any change of raiment, shivering with cold, exhausted with fatigue, their plight was most miserable. When the kind islanders saw them they were touched with their misfortunes. Nor did they rest in pitiful feelings only. They set actively to work to alleviate their sufferings. They opened their humble dwellings to receive them. They supplied them with what food they could. They helped them to dry their dripping clothes; they collected fuel to kindle fires by which to warm them; they gave themselves no little trouble and labour to give them every comfort within their reach. And what enhances the kindness is that there could be no hope of reward. The men whom they were helping had lost everything they possessed. Their whole property had gone down to the bottom of the sea. They could give nothing in return for what they received. All the more was the uncommon kindness which they showed them pure and unalloyed with selfishness. They were unconsciously obeying the precept of Paul's Master, "Do good, hoping for nothing again." May we not hope that they found the truth of his promise, "Your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest"? It is a great confirmation of this hope that we read in the following verses how the hand of the Lord was stretched out in signs and wonders. The miracles of Scripture are never useless or gratuitous displays of power. The most obvious purpose of those wrought in Malta was the conversion of the natives; and it is very pleasant to think that those kind men who were privileged to minister to the necessities of Paul and Luke and their companions in the faith, reaped a rich and unexpected reward, when they learned at their mouths the blessed promises of God's grace, and were received into the number of the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Vers. 11—15.—*Refreshment.* What a weary time had Paul's three last years of life been! Incessant fightings with his hard-hearted, virulent countrymen; a pitiless storm of hatred and persecution and false accusation raging incessantly against him; trial succeeding trial, yet bringing no respite from injustice; weary prison hours, while the active spirit was bound by the chain which kept him prisoner at Cæsarea; and then the furious tempest, and the labours and anxieties of that terrific voyage, and the threats of the savage soldiery, and the loss of all he had in the shipwreck, and the hardships to be endured by his frail body in the cold wintry season. Save the kindness

of the barbarians, there had been no rest to mind or body since he arrived at Jerusalem. And now his face was set towards Rome. But who could tell what awaited him there? He was going there as a prisoner. He was going to another trial. He was going to stand before Nero, with no protection but his innocence. He had countrymen at Rome. Would they behave towards him as his countrymen in Judæa had done? And what had he to expect from the populace at Rome? He had never seen Rome. But for a poor lone prisoner there was plenty in that city of blood and lust and unbounded power to awaken vague fears and undefined anxieties, and to trouble the firmest spirit. And so he walked on toward the goal, hopes and fears perhaps struggling within him for the mastery. And now they were just arriving at Appii Forum, when, lo! a considerable crowd advanced to meet him. Who could they be? and what was their errand? A moment or two soon explained it. They were brethren, Christian brethren, issuing from the foulness of the great heathen city in all the purity of faith and love, to come and greet and welcome the apostle. There, at a thousand miles from his native land, he was not among strangers; he was surrounded by those who had never indeed seen his face, but who loved him fervently in Christ Jesus. There, in the land of idolatry, amidst heathen temples and every form of wickedness flourishing in that hot-bed of corruption, he was in the midst of saints, by whom the Name of Jesus was loved and adored. In that stronghold of Satan there was a chosen band not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, not ashamed of Paul his prisoner—a band of men to whom Paul's arrival was a joy and a glory, and who were come upwards of forty miles, in all the warmth of love and admiration, to honour him and welcome him, and to give him proof of their obedience and devotion to him. Their presence was like a bright gleam of sunshine upon the apostle's way. His heart leaped up in response to that welcome greeting. His bruised and wearied spirit revived. Love and joy and hope made music in his soul, and his first thought was to give God thanks for this refreshment. Then with fresh courage he went on his way like a giant refreshed with wine, ready to work or to suffer, to contend, to bear witness, to preach, to travel, to write, to spend and be spent, to live or to die for Christ, as his heavenly Father should appoint, till the set time should come when all his toil would be over, and the cross would be exchanged for the glorious crown of righteousness and of life.

**Vers. 16—31.—*The fall.*** The main feature in these concluding verses of the Acts of the Apostles, as it is one of the most momentous incidents in the history of God's dealings with mankind, is the fall of Israel from their proper place in the Church of God. For nearly two thousand years, if we date from the call of Abraham, this one family had been separated from the rest of mankind, and eventually received institutions of such wonderful strength and vitality as to keep them separate through centuries of extraordinary vicissitudes, that they might be depositaries of God's great promise, and his witnesses in the world. But when at length the great promise made by God to the fathers had its fulfilment in the birth of Jesus Christ into the world, and the time of rest and glory to Israel would seem to have arrived, another event happened, also foretold by the prophets, viz. the rejection of their Messiah by an unbelieving and stiff-necked generation. He came to his own, and his own received him not. "Who hath believed our report?" was the prophetic announcement of this unbelief. "Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive" was the prophet's description of the gross heart of the people when the glad sound of the gospel should come unto them. And so now it came to pass. We have seen in the preceding narrative how the most gifted of men, with a profusion of love and eloquence and power which has never been surpassed, went about from country to country, and from city to city, proclaiming to his Jewish brethren the unsearchable riches of Christ. We have seen how everywhere to the mass he spoke in vain. The blessed Word of life fell on ears dull of hearing. They resented the message when they should have hailed the messenger with delight. They sought to silence that tongue in death which spoke to them of Jesus and the resurrection. And now once more a chance is given them. The generous prisoner has no sooner set his foot in Rome than he calls to him all his fellow-countrymen. Forgiving all the wrongs and injuries and violence which had embittered his life, he once more lays before them the blessed news of the kingdom of God, and exhorts them to enter in. The exhorta-



tion is in vain. They judge themselves unworthy of eternal life; they will not have God's Christ to reign over them. And so they seal their own doom. The time of their *fall* is come—the time when the kingdom of God must be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. But now mark the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. See how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out. This fall of Israel, so sad in itself, so sad in relation to the great fathers of the house of Israel, so fatal, one would have thought, to the interests of the kingdom of Christ, becomes the riches of the world. From that fall emerges the great mystery of God, which had lain concealed through ages and generations, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and partakers of the great Messianic promise. Through that fall of Israel salvation came to the breadth and length of the heathen world. "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles," and they were ready to hear it. The light that had been shut up within the four walls of the commonwealth of Israel, and only shining as it were through the chinks and crannies of those walls, now that those walls were broken down blazed forth to fill the world with its heavenly brightness. The voice of Divine truth, of which only faint echoes had been heard outside those walls, now went out through all lands in all the fulness of its converting power. Now were the heathen given to Christ for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession. The fall of Israel was become the riches of the Gentiles, and their loss the world's gain. But the mystery of God was not yet worked out. That had yet to be unfolded and shown to the world, which St. Paul told the Roman Church, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Israel has not stumbled to his final fall. The eternal hand still holds him up through centuries of darkness; and the eternal voice will yet say to him, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!" The time will come, for God has spoken it, when the heart of stone, which denied the Lord of glory, will be exchanged for a heart of flesh, which will love and adore him. The time will come when the long-lost sheep will return to the good and loving Shepherd who is waiting to receive them, "and so all Israel shall be saved." How or when that promised time will come we know not. But we know that it will come. And when it does come it will be to the whole human race as *life from the dead*. Watch for it, O ye Gentile Christians! Watch for it, O ye sons of Israel! Pray for it, all ye that love Christ! for it will be the day of the fulness of his glory, and the consummation of your bliss.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—10.—A picture of the human.** In these few verses we have a graphic picture of some of the experiences of our life and of the instincts or intuitions of our nature.

**I. A PICTURE OF THE HUMAN.** 1. Human suffering. (1) Trouble. Doubtless the first sentiment on escaping death by shipwreck is intense gladness and gratitude. But the next is the consciousness of loss. The man who lands on the island after battling with the waves first congratulates himself and (if he be a devout man) thanks God that his life is preserved; then he realizes what he has left behind him; and he soon becomes conscious of the exposure to which he is subjected—he allows himself to be troubled "because of the present rain, and because of the cold" (ver. 2). It is not shipwreck only, but many other kinds of wreck which plunge men "into the cold," into adversity, into bereavement of the good which they had enjoyed. (2) Sickness (ver. 8). 2. Unspoiled human nature. Such is the dire effect of long-continued sin upon the soul, that it often happens that nearly every vestige of the goodness with which our Creator first endowed us disappears. As God made us, it was natural that we should compassionately our fellows in misery, and that we should be grateful to them for their help. Only too often, however, man is found pitiless and thankless. The shipwrecked mariner is murdered as he strikes the shore; the benefactor reaps no blessing, no honour for his kindness. Not so, however, here. Here was (1) *pity*, "the barbarous people showed no little kindness" (ver. 2). Here, also, was (2) *gratitude* (ver. 10). 3. An ineradicable human conviction. Underlying the conclusion to which these natives of Malta came (ver. 4), was the conviction, common to our kind, that

sin merits punishment and will be overtaken by it. This is a fundamental and ultimate principle; we need not try to account for it or to "get behind it." It is sufficient in itself; it is a conviction that comes from the Author of our spiritual nature, which will not be dislodged, which itself accounts for much that we think, say, and do—that sin deserves penalty, and sooner or later must bear it. 4. A human error, common to the unenlightened. A narrow mind and one unilluminated by the teaching of God makes a great mistake in applying the truth just stated; it infers that any particular misfortune is referable to some special sin (ver. 4; see John ix. 3; vii. 24). It also falls into error of a similar kind, though conducting to an opposite conclusion—it infers that a man who has an extraordinary escape is a special favourite of Heaven (ver. 6). Taught of God, we know that, while sin brings penalty, inward and circumstantial, and while righteousness brings Divine regard and honour, God often permits or sends suffering and sorrow in fatherly love for the promotion of the highest well-being (Heb. xii. 5—11). We have also here—

II. THE MANIFEST PRESENCE OF THE DIVINE. Christ was present: 1. In the person of his apostle. That teacher of truth who had been so influential a passenger on board ship (ch. xxvii.), and who makes himself so useful now (vers. 3, 8, 9), is there in his Master's Name, and on his Master's work. 2. In the exercise of benignant power: (1) protection from harm (ver. 5, and Mark xvi. 18); (2) exercise of healing power (vers. 8, 9, and Mark xvi. 18). We may learn three special lessons. (a) That true dignity is never above usefulness, even of the humblest kind; a Paul may gather sticks in time of emergency without losing honour. (b) That Christian generosity must not be behind native kindness. (c) That bodily benefit is an admirable introduction to spiritual help. Who can doubt that Paul used the gratitude and honour which he reaped (ver. 10) to find a way for the truth of Christ to the minds and hearts of the Maltese?—C.

Ver. 15.—*Human kindness.* A striking and touching instance is this of valuable human kindness. It is a positive relief to our minds to think that the faithful veteran soldier of Jesus Christ, bearing in his body such marks of lifelong conflict, worn with toil and care and suffering, having escaped from one kind of affliction and on his way to another, met with such considerate kindness as greatly comforted and cheered him. The text may remind us—

I. THAT HUMAN KINDNESS IS A DIVINELY IMPLANTED DISPOSITION. As God created us "in his own image," we were made to feel and show kindness one to another; to rejoice in one another's success; to promote one another's prosperity; to sympathize with one another in sorrow; to be willing to deny ourselves, to run risks, to make sacrifices, to help others in their time of need.

II. THAT UNDER THE CURSE OF SIN IT MAY BE ERADICATED FROM THE SOUL; *e.g.* pirates, wreckers, thugs, etc.

III. THAT IT SHOULD BE DEVELOPED BY CONSTANT CULTURE. Kindness, like all other graces, needs regular cultivation, or it will decline or even perish. It needs: 1. The nurture which comes from the utterance of truth; the reception of right thoughts into the mind. 2. The strengthening which proceeds from daily illustration; that which is derived from the practice of slight and simple acts of considerateness and good will. 3. The confirmation of larger acts of self-sacrificing love; such acts as cause trouble, as involve difficulty, as entail risk, as necessitate expenditure.

IV. THAT IT HAS RENDERED HIGH SERVICE IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST. 1. To the great King himself; for shall we not say that much of the ministry of those women who waited on him so kindly, and something of the attendance granted by the men who tendered him their aid, was the offering of human kindness rather than of Divine service? Yet it was not on that account unacceptable or unserviceable. 2. To his apostles. Here is one instance in which human kindness greatly comforted and heartened a valued servant of Christ, and helped him on his useful and fruitful course. 3. To his servants in all succeeding centuries. Who shall tell how much the cause of Christ has been furthered by the opportune kindness shown by tender hearts and gentle hands to those who have been its representatives and champions?

V. THAT IT IS AN ADMIRABLE THING IN ITSELF: one that is highly esteemed of God (Heb. xiii. 16; Eph. iii. 32); one that is beautiful in the sight of man, that

*adorns* the doctrine, that is to the character what the bloom is to the plant; one that has a general and precious reflex influence on those that exercise and exhibit it.

VI. THAT IT IS A BLESSING FOR WHICH WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO GOD. Paul "thanked God" as well as "took courage." We have reason to thank God for human kindness as much as for any blessing we receive. For though this does not come as perceptibly from him as the sunshine and the rain, yet ultimately and actually it is as much his gift as they are. Only the loving God can originate love in the human heart and in the human life. "God is our Sun," from whom streams every ray of human kindness that falls on our path and cheers our soul. Let us, too, thank God for it, while we take courage from it.—C.

Vers. 17—28.—*The Christian and the Jew.* Here we have the Christian and the Jew brought into close contact; and there seems to have been as fair an opportunity for the latter to understand and appreciate the former as could ever have been granted. With calmness, with the wisdom and fulness of long study and mature experience, the most enlightened Christian apologist presented the case of Christianity to these men of the Jewish faith. We may look at—

I. THE INTRODUCTION. Paul felt that his position was one which was open to misunderstanding on the part of his fellow-countrymen, and he resolved on a free and full explanation. In this we recognize (1) his constant faithfulness; for it was in discharge of his duty to his Divine Master that he sought to conciliate those who were his enemies; also (2) his habitual courtesy; for the whole strain of his address to the "chief of the Jews" was suave and courteous in a high degree (vers. 17—20). In their reply (vers. 21, 22) we recognize (1) a formal impartiality combined with (2) a real prepossession of mind decidedly against the cause of which he was the advocate.

II. THE CONFERENCE. (Vers. 23—28.) We have: 1. Christian earnestness confronting Jewish curiosity. Paul "expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them," etc., evidently with characteristic zeal. They listened, curious and wondering what he had to say. "We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest." Christian fervour on the one side, Jewish eagerness on the other. 2. Christian truth striving with Jewish prejudice. Paul marshalled his facts and his arguments, we cannot doubt, to the full height of his fervour and his practised ability, maintaining his plea at great length (ver. 23). But he spoke to men whose minds were occupied with prejudice. The "sect was everywhere spoken against," they said to him. They probably used much stronger language in speaking to one another. 3. Christian truth prevailing over Jewish prejudice. But seldom do we read of men being "convinced against their will;" but we are glad to read here that "some believed," etc. (ver. 24). 4. But we have the old sad story of Jewish prejudice prevailing over Christian truth. "Some believed not." 5. Finally we have Christian indignation uttering itself freely (vers. 25—27). We turn to—

III. THE LESSONS WE GAIN FROM IT. 1. That it is right for us to invite and address the curious as well as the devout. We should summon to the sanctuary not only those who are wishful to worship God, but those also who are solicitous to learn what we have to say on any subject with which we deal. 2. That we should exert ourselves to present truth in all its phases and with all our force. As Paul made his appeal to the Law and to the prophets, and developed and illustrated his argument at full length, so we should present the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, in all its fulness and in all its force, not being satisfied until we have "declared the whole counsel of God." 3. That we may reasonably hope for some measure of success. We have to contend, not indeed with Jewish prejudice, but with human obduracy. Yet armed with Divine truth and aided by the Divine Spirit, we should look for success. 4. That we need not be surprised at partial failure. Where apostles were baffled we may be beaten. 5. That the hour of rebuke sometimes comes in the ministry of Christ. 6. That one sphere failing, another will open to the earnest worker (ver. 28). The salvation of God is sent to all men, and there are those who "will hear it," if there are many who will not.—C.

Vers. 30, 31.—*Concerning Christ and his kingdom.* "The kingdom of God," which Paul preached in his own hired house for two years, was none other than the "kingdom



of Christ," or the "kingdom of heaven" which Jesus announced, and concerning which he said so much when he was on earth (see Matt. vi. 33; Luke xxii. 29; John xviii. 36; Matt. xiii. 24—50, etc.). Christ came for the purpose of establishing, or rather re-establishing, the kingdom of God on earth, of reinstating the Divine Father on the throne of the human world. This was the end and aim of his mission; therefore "those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" are the same things which concern "the kingdom of God" (text and also ver. 23). We look, then, at this kingdom—

I. ITS SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY. He has told us with great distinctness that his kingdom is "not of this world." We gather from all that he said and did that it is none other and nothing lower than the spiritual and universal sovereignty which God, the Divine Father, which he himself, the Divine Saviour, would exercise over mankind; the domain of righteousness and love over the willing minds, the rejoicing hearts, of a redeemed and regenerated world—a kingdom in which God is to be the one Sovereign, righteousness the only accepted law, love the pervading and prevailing spirit, joy the abounding and abiding issue.

II. THE CONDITIONS OF CITIZENSHIP. From a Divine point of view the condition is that of *regeneration* (John iii. 3). From that point of view which is open to us, and from which our action is possible, the conditions are *humility* (Matt. v. 3; Luke xviii. 17), and *faith in Jesus Christ himself*, "By faith . . . in me" (ch. xxvi. 18; John vi. 29, 35, 40, 53, etc.).

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ITS SUBJECTS. 1. Docility (Matt. xviii. 4). 2. Love (John xiii. 35). 3. Continued obedience to the will of Christ (John viii. 31). 4. Faithfulness unto suffering (Luke xvii. 20). 5. Peacefulness of spirit (Matt. v. 9; Rom. xiv. 17). 6. Sacred joy (Rom. v. 11; xiv. 17).

IV. THE METHOD OF ITS WARFARE. Its warfare is wholly spiritual (John viii. 36). 1. It assails spiritual evils. It does battle with sin in all its forms and in all its consequences. 2. It employs spiritual weapons (2 Cor. x. 4); these are truth, love, faith, consistency, etc.

V. THE MANNER OF ITS COMING. Some earthly powers come with great ostentation, with sound of trumpet, with announcement of herald, with "pomp and circumstance;" but "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation." He "did not strive nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets," when he lived below. And now he comes in gospel privilege, in gracious invitation, in benignant influences, in Divine prompting; not as the storm comes, but as the dew; not in the great and strong wind that rends the mountains, but in the still small voice that touches the heart and makes all things new.

VI. ITS OPENNESS TO EVERY SEEKING SOUL. If there is one thing concerning the "kingdom of God, or one thing which "concerns the Lord Jesus Christ" which is a more true and faithful saying than another, which is more valuable and precious to the human world than another, it is this—that the gates of that blessed kingdom stand open night and day, are wide open to receive the most unworthy if they will pass through in sincere humility and simple faith; that the Lord Jesus Christ stands ever waiting to receive the heart which is looking for a Saviour from sin; that he is not only *prepared*, but *eager* to welcome to his side and his service every human soul that is hungering after righteousness, that will accept his mercy, that will take his yoke; that unto all of these he will give, not only present and abiding rest, but future and everlasting joy.—C.

Vers. 1—10.—*Occurrences at Malta.* I. THE HOSPITALITY OF THE HEATHEN. The instinct of kindness is God-implanted in the human heart. Hospitality was not so much a virtue in heathendom as the refusal of it a crime. So much the more must any "shutting up of the bowels of compassion" against the needy brother or the stranger be an offence against the Son of man. The great charge which he, in his depiction of the scene of judgment, brings against the unfaithful is the neglect of the common offices of love.

II. THE CHRISTIAN FINDS EVERYWHERE A HOME. For if he carries the love of God in his heart, no coast can be foreign land, no colour or custom of men repel. It was a heathen who said, "I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me." The Christian may translate the saying, "I am a follower of the Son of man, and nothing that is dear to him is strange to me."

**III. YET HE MEETS PERIL, MISCONSTRUCTION, AND ENMITY.** How quickly do the open brows of hospitable kindness change into scowls and frowns as the viper fastens on Paul's hand! They reason he must be a murderer. Occurrences are full of effects without visible causes. The untrained mind makes out of coincidences chains of cause and effect which do not exist. The afflicted man is supposed to be a wicked man. In propagating Christianity we need to take the sword of the Spirit, which owes its bright temper to Divine intelligence. We must meet unreason with reason, and cast out superstitious darkness by the clear light of all accessible knowledge.

**IV. THE CHRISTIAN IS DELIVERED THAT HE MAY DELIVER OTHERS.** As Paul casts off the serpent harmless, he is seen to be under the Divine protection. Here is a man who leads apparently a charmed life. The waves could not swallow him, nor the serpent sting him (cf. Ps. xci. 11; Mark xvi. 18). The heathen mind revolts from one extreme of superstition to another. Now Paul must be a god! "The common mass know no measure; they raise a man to heaven or thrust him into hell" (ch. xiv. 12, 13). The Christian may rapidly pass from the extreme of depreciation or shame to that of honour, feeling equally that he deserves neither. Yet both in the one and the other the business of the Christian is not to defend himself from misunderstandings, but "through good report and evil report," as Paul said, to go on with his work and witness, leaving Providence to show the kind of work the hour and the place demand. Here Paul is entirely devoted to the healing activity of the body. There are times of silence; and the spectacle of the servant of Christ busy in doing good during his stay in the island may have wrought more on the memory of the people than many sermons would have done.—J.

**Vers. 11—15.—The passage from Malta to Rome.** **I. BLESSINGS BY THE WAY.** Christian fellowship is enjoyed. Unity and relationship in Jesus Christ make the unknown as known. The heart dissolves distance and strangeness. God has everywhere hidden children. The discovery of them is the discovery of a dear bond of brotherhood, and this fills the heart with joy (comp. Rom. i. 12). The coming forth of the brethren from Rome to meet the party showed that his letter to them had not been without result. So he thanked God and took heart. This slight word seems to allude to a certain failing of heart and dejection, such as the greatest souls are liable to in critical moments. His life was passed in cloud and sunshine, and the record of both has been faithfully left behind. In both there is deep encouragement for us.

**II. THE ARRIVAL AT ROME.** It was an epoch: 1. *For him.* His life-goal is at last reached. He comes, a homeless stranger, yet escorted by loving friends; as an evil-doer in bonds, yet with the grace of God in his heart; as a victim doomed to sacrifice, yet as a victorious conqueror, to plant the banner of the cross in the citadel of heathendom. 2. *For heathendom* it was a critical moment. It is the signal for the wane of its glory and pride. For the next three centuries it was to lead a struggling existence, until all that was good in it should be absorbed into the kingdom of God, and the rest be cast away with the refuse of time. 3. *For Judaism.* Paul turns for the last time to his people. Exclusiveness is decaying; the priest and the doctor and their followers, who refuse to come to terms with Christ, must fold their garments about them and pass into solitude amidst the life of civilization. Rome is to replace Jerusalem. 4. *For Christianity.* Sanguinary struggles await her in Rome, but in the end a glorious victory.—J.

**Vers. 16—19.—Paul and the Roman Jews.** **I. A FINAL PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF INNOCENCE.** It is full of manly courage and simplicity. It was no subversive teaching or conduct that had brought him into his present position. No definite charge had ever been proved against him. Like the Master, it was as a fulfiller, not as a destroyer, that he had wrought. It was for the "hope of Israel" he had suffered. Great teachers are always fulfillers. But because they see that truth is not stagnant, but living, they are accused of innovation. When we accuse others of innovation, let us ask whether it be not that our own garb of thought has grown old. The whole New Testament story is one long protest against imposing fetters on the freedom of the living spirit and the course of truth.

**II. A FINAL CONFESSION.** Of Jesus as the Messiah. And a final argument with his

countrymen. To point back to Moses and the prophets in evidence of this was to show that the doctrine of the cross and the resurrection was the fulfilment and consummation of the ancient faith of Israel. But this was no cold statement, no perfunctory statement. From morning till evening Paul laboured with his countrymen's souls. Men are never weary of speaking of that of which their hearts are full. It is not the argumentative side of Christian truth on which every preacher or teacher can dwell. But whatever be the aspect of truth and life he conceives with force and which possesses his soul, let him speak and not be weary. The result will be the same as with Paul, and cannot be expected otherwise. Some will be persuaded, others will disbelieve. The clear expression of any positive truth will be echoed in assent and resisted in negation. Perhaps we can never be sure that we have spoken the truth until we have met opposition.

III. FINAL EFFUSION OF LOVE. He addresses them as brethren, and after telling them of the enmity and persecution he had experienced at the hands of their fathers in Palestine, he still knocks once more at the door of their hearts. The prophetic words of his close are full of a solemn pathos. The audience, disunited, falls to two sections. It is not that division begins with the preaching of the gospel, but the hidden disunion of the heart is brought to light. The sun does not produce difference, but only reveals difference, which could not be recognized in darkness. Hardness of heart is both a natural consequence of contempt of the truth, and a Divine judgment upon it. But the aurora of the future shines brightly against this dark background of Israel's rejection. No sin, no ingratitude of man, can dim the splendour of that eternal heaven of grace. If the Jews will not come to the great supper of God, the Gentiles shall fill his house.—J.

Vers. 30, 31.—*Paul's preaching at Rome.* I. IT WAS A FULFILMENT OF A PROMISE. (Ch. ix. 15.)

II. IT WAS A PROPHECY OF THE FUTURE. Long has the world been ruled from Rome; though often through corrupt forms, the Spirit of Christ has gone forth from her to heal and to civilize. Slowly the dominion of Rome must melt to give place to the idea which she has represented—the world-wide dominion of the kingdom of God.

III. IT WAS THE REALIZATION OF THE PREACHER'S IDEAL. 1. *There is a welcome for all.* Nothing inaccessible, forbidding, hard to approach, should be in the preacher's manner. No "stand aside, for I am holier than thou!" He must make men feel that he has no reserves, no keeping back of anything they ought to know, no half-truths; that they are welcome fully to all the best of head and heart. He must not deal with people as sinners beneath him, but as his fellows, as man with men. 2. *There is boldness of utterance. Parrhesia*, the last word but one of the book. Without this, the preacher is nerveless and ineffective. If he fears his audience, fears public opinion, fears himself, he is undone. The pulpit is the post for a brave man, not less than the sentinel's in war-time. "The hour is regal when he mounts on guard." Cowardice may be fatal to himself and others. Self-surrender to God, like that of Paul, is the secret of the freedom of the preacher. 3. *Unfettered external liberty.* These were, perhaps, the happiest years of his life. "Unhindered" (*akólutós*)—this is the last word of the book. How shall the preacher excuse himself, if in a free country, with every encouragement to free speech, he fails to utter himself and his message, and declare, so far as he understands it, the whole counsel of God? When shall men feel that the Jesus Christ is the Friend of all men, and that his Church is their home? When, for one thing, his ministers rise to the ideal of their high calling as it is illustrated in this final scene of the book—Paul the teacher and preacher at Rome.—J.

Vers. 1—6.—*The instability of ignorance, and the stability of the true Christian.* The whole circumstance an apt illustration of the spiritual forces working in the midst of the natural. The shipwrecked company. Paul active in helping. The barbarians better than those who abused Divine blessings like the Jews, who violated Divine order like the Romans; but, though actuated by kindness, easily led away by superstition and ignorant prejudice.

I. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF NATURAL INSTINCTS. 1. Justice easily perverted, because misapplied. 2. The wonders of the material world both misunderstood and mis-



employed. 3. Reactions, both intellectual and moral, the curse of the world. Irrational depreciation and irrational homage side by side. The world's hero-worship a sad comment on its fickleness and blindness. *Aut Deus aut diabolus*. We want some true guiding principles which religion alone furnishes.

II. THE STRENGTH WHICH RESTS ON GOD. 1. Calm in danger, because confident of Divine approval and mission. The records of missionary heroism supply many such facts. As much as possible we should cherish the same spirit in common life. True presence of mind the growth of moral strength. 2. He that is full of the Spirit of God will shake off vipers into the fire. The viper of detraction and calumny. The viper of personal animosity. The viper of worldly solicitation. The viper of devouring anxieties and cares. If we are doing God's work, he will preserve us. And the world which at first has misunderstood and injured us will sweep round in its thoughts, and do us honour as God's servants.—R.

Vers. 7—10.—“*The healing of the nations.*” The mission of Christianity to heal both body and soul. The powerful appeal which can be made through gratitude. The necessity of a prayerful spirit in the exercise of the gifts bestowed.

I. LESSONS ON THE WORK OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER. 1. *Personal character* a great power in the ministration of truth. “They said he was a god.” We must make a way for ourselves to men's hearts. 2. *Benevolent works* an introduction for the gospel. “The rest came.” 3. *The chief men* should be won—not merely the lower classes. The unconverted rulers and rich have sorrows in their homes. We may reach them through their family affections.

II. THE SPIRITUAL HEALING OF THE WORLD IS THE HOPE OF ITS FUTURE. 1. A retrospect of the beneficent influence of Christianity on the life of man. 2. A contrast between the method of the gospel and the pretentious but powerless schemes of socialists and political and scientific enthusiasts. 3. The works of Christ affect the mass through the individual. Multitudinism is delusion. But the mass of the Christian Church must be aggressive on the mass of the world.—R.

Ver. 15.—“*The break in the clouds.*” “He thanked God, and took courage.” Review of the apostolic history. The word of God fulfilled. The varied emotions of the ambassador's heart, personal in view of his work, in anticipation of the results of the future in Rome. The gospel at the gates of the empire. Spiritual power before worldly power.

I. THE STUDY OF PROVIDENCE a help to the development of Christian character and life. 1. It promotes thankfulness. 2. It confirms faith. 3. It draws Christians nearer to one another, as they rejoice together. 4. It prepares for work and suffering. Paul needed all the courage he could take.

II. THE USE WE SHOULD MAKE OF OUR OPPORTUNITIES. 1. Not to “rest and be thankful,” but to *press on for the prize*. The prosperous times of the Church, as of the individual, often precede great trials. Paul is outside Rome, but he is not out of danger. 2. The opportunity of renewed intercourse with brethren and revived life in the Church, for higher testimony. Help each other to be strong.—R.

Ver. 22.—“*The reproach which must be borne.*” “As concerning this sect,” etc. The disciples of Jesus supported by his example. “Despised and rejected of men.” The tendency of human thought and life to stagnate. The strength of vested interests. To be spoken against tries faith, but strengthens principle. Individually, socially, the reproach of Christ must be borne.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD by the manifestation of the truth. 1. The doctrine of Christ unwelcome. 2. The prejudices of party an obstacle to the spread of truth. 3. The victories of the gospel obtained by the grace of God.

II. THE DISCIPLINE OF DISCIPLESHIP. 1. Healthy. 2. Temporary. Reactions to be reckoned for. Hold on, and the world speaks as much for, as once against. 3. The life which survives the oppositions of pride and the misrepresentations of enmity is trained to a larger sphere. The sect spoken against became the orthodoxy of the future. The first enemies of Christianity were the Jews, but the opposition of unbelief was overruled to the greater victories of truth. So now the time of transition is severe

discipline, but it will be followed by a time of splendid triumph when the messengers have been prepared for it.—R

Ver. 23.—*The Christian advocate putting forth his pleas.* “Persuading them concerning Jesus.” Importance of the crisis. Jerusalem. Rome. A few years, and Jerusalem destroyed. Judaism brought Paul in fetters to Rome. The old Jerusalem and the new Jerusalem struggling together. Brief notice of Paul’s labours at Rome, and then the book closes. Significant of the fact that the new dispensation was inaugurated. Peculiar population of Rome, representative of the cosmopolitan Roman empire, a fitting ground for the gospel to be sown in.

I. THE MATTER OF THE MESSAGE. “Concerning Jesus.” (Compare the Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews.) 1. The righteousness of God set forth, instead of man’s righteousness. 2. The priestly office of Christ abolishing ritualism, and opening the gates of the spiritual temple. 3. Jesus the promised King, the Lifter-up of the fallen people, the Desire of all nations, the Renovator of the world. Compare with such a setting forth of Jesus, the state of the Jews and Romans, in faith, worship, and hope, both in the individual and in society, both for time and for eternity.

II. THE METHOD ADOPTED by the messenger. Persuasion. 1. *The written Word of God* the basis. The Old and the New Testaments harmonized. Faith is an outcome of faith: “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” 2. *Personal testimony.* “I am a Christian; be such as I am.” True persuasion is personal. We must aim at the heart, and not merely at the intellect; and the heart must direct the aim. 3. Those that would persuade must be prepared to use none but spiritual means. Neither sensational excitement, nor ritualistic seductions, nor corrupt appeals to lower natures, are permissible to the Christian advocate. Let truth win its victory.—R.

Ver. 24.—*The Word of God trying the hearts of men.* “And some believed,” etc. The end of all preaching is practical faith. Not sentiment. Not mere intellectual change. Illustrate from those who listened to Paul. What faith involved to a Jew, to a heathen. The alternative, not indifference, not neutrality, but “disbelief” (Revised Version), exemplified in the opposition of Jews. Moral responsibility for faith, as seen in the light of the Old Testament view (vers. 26, 27). Resistance to the Spirit a moral perversion and hardening.

I. GOD’S SPIRIT WORKS BY MEANS OF HUMAN AGENCY. 1. The truth is presented to the heart, notwithstanding infirmities of method and manner. 2. The external ministration corresponds to the internal work of grace. 3. The essential point in all preaching is the presentation of an object of faith. Jesus.

II. THOSE WHO LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD ARE TRIED BY IT. 1. The broad distinction between acceptance and rejection of Christ. The heart which moves towards the Saviour is changed. 2. No compromise in the final result, though hearts may deceive themselves. By faith we stand. 3. While there is the opportunity of hearing, there is hope of turning the unbelief into faith. God’s people must never take it for granted that any are beyond reach. They hear not as they might hear. 4. The opportunity may be itself decisive. “Now is the accepted time.”—R.

Vers. 30, 31.—*The watchman upon the walls of Jerusalem.* “And he abode two whole years,” etc. The last look at Paul significant of the future. The kingdom of God traced in Acts from the old Jerusalem to Rome. The apostle of the Gentiles left at his work, soon to seal it with his blood. Pauline Christianity in its relation to the spread of the kingdom. No one taught better “the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.”

I. AN EXAMPLE OF INDIVIDUAL DEVOTEDNESS. The value of such a witness to the early Church. 1. All his strength derived from Christ. 2. All his life given to service. 3. The character of the man opened for him the way of his ministry. He longed to be at Rome, and at Rome he fulfilled his own ideal of the Christian messenger.

II. A WONDERFUL ILLUSTRATION OF OVERRULING PROVIDENCE. The prophecy fulfilled. The restraint of enemies. The provision of opportunities. The sustenance of physical and moral strength. The preparation of the man for his post. The intellectual

training and world-wide experience all employed. A post is fitted for each, and each is fitted for his post.

III. A SIGNIFICANT FACT IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY. The most momentous facts not always those which appear most startling. The palace of the Cæsars beside the hired house of the apostle. The world then would have despised the day of small things. A germ of new life in the old corruption. The gospel wins its triumphs by simple methods. The Acts of the Apostles are greater in the history of the world than the annals of Rome. The kingdom of God has come, is coming, shall come. May we say in heart and life, "Thy kingdom come"!—R.

Vers. 1—6.—*A strong family likeness.* This short episode is, in its proportion, as refreshing to the reader as to those who played the actual part in it. It is the oasis of narrative. It reads like a brief parable of the human heart. Or we may be impressed by it, as by some portrait, which presents to our view features with which we seem to be very familiar, and half hiding, half revealing a likeness to some one well known. They are the features that "half conceal and half reveal" the likeness of the human heart. And throughout the family of human heart, very strong indeed is the family likeness, above what can be found anywhere else. Notice these features, so characteristic of it.

I. ITS KINDNESS. 1. The heart loves kindness—to receive it. 2. The heart loves kindness—to do it. Both of these are deep facts of the heart, and speak not obscurely him who made it. 3. The kindness that is in the heart is touched towards bodily want, cold, hunger, thirst, shelterless exposure; *and this tells the tale of all the rest* (Matt. xxv. 35—45). 4. The kindness of the heart contravenes in human life the bare action of the principle of natural selection; it tempers it with irresistibly modifying and irresistibly elevating moral influences; it determines and regulates in a way all its own "the survival of the fittest," and it is the thing on earth likeliest what is habitual in heaven! 5. The kindness of the human heart is found *everywhere*, and in *every* age of the world.

II. ITS SUPERSTITION. 1. The superstition that is so often betrayed by the human heart is an unerring sign of *the sense of God* and the instinct of the infinite present in it. 2. It means that sense unguided, that instinct baffled. 3. It evidences deep conviction of moral distinctions inside man, and of presiding moral judgments outside men, and authoritative over them, all unfed as these may be from truth's own springs, and unpointed to their infinitely worthy objects. 4. It is a constant rehearsal of judgment to come.

III. ITS SWIFTNESS TO TURN. Hence come (1) the worse uses of such versatility and such swiftness, fickleness, and caprice, and waywardness, and love of *mere* variety; but (2) the better uses, readiness to forgive, swiftness to run and even meet the returning prodigal; (3) the thoroughness of contrition and conversion, that need but a moment—like those of Paul himself; and (4) the power to recover, after sorest stricken griefs, and most fearful storms of sorrow or of passion.

IV. ITS ADDICTEDNESS TO EXTREMES. The people of Melita began with simplest, most unaffected kindness. They saw no instructing providence, but when the occasion came superstition filled their heart, and Paul is "no doubt a murderer, whom vengeance suffereth not to live, though he hath escaped the sea." This is their short and summary theology. But it is not altogether so stiff and unopen to conviction. They are changed to the opposite pole when they find, "after a great while," *i.e.* what *seemed* a great while for eyes fixed in one direction, but which was indeed a very little while, that vengeance does not make an end to the life of Paul. And from a pursued murderer, they exalt him to the skies of the gods! Happy if the history of every erring heart had as much of the kindness as was here, and no more of the error and the mischief and the disaster than were here. Kindness began the scene, and, when fear clouded it over awhile, the last "change of mind" was not from better to worse, but from worse to better. Yet still how mournfully plain it is that nature's light *alone*, leaves the barbarian! For so he must be called justly who exalts the child of God into a god himself.—B.

Vers. 7—10.—*A type of the beneficent action of Christianity.* Christian truth embodied in Christian men had not long been in an island to which it was quite strange



before it found its footing, made its mark, and left behind it memories equally lasting and fragrant. Amid the wide group of suggestions offered by these verses, we may especially note the following as particularly worthy of a place in connection with this history :—

**I. THE WATCHFULNESS OF THE MASTER OVER HIS SERVANTS TO BE WELL TRUSTED.** God had guided Paul and his companions, after a fierce voyage at all events, to a safe haven at last. But here also they found, (1) in common with all the company, for very humanity's sake, kindness, and "no common kindness" either; and (2) they found also for themselves honoured and distinguished entertainment. How often since has this been seen true! What kindness, what entertainment, has been heartily given to men as the servants of Christ, which nothing else personal to themselves would have either earned for them or entitled them to!

**II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO KINDNESS OF HEART AND OF ACT THAT CHRISTIANITY PROMOTES.** Publius showed kindness, doubtless not imagining any reward for himself. But most surely he received abundant recompense of reward. The prospect of any such return undoubtedly is not to be waited for or reckoned upon, but the bountiful hand of Jesus, whose generosity will never be outdone, ought to be noted. Generous, indeed, are the acknowledgments of Christianity. It repays kindness of heart and kindness of act with an inner satisfaction and with a practical beneficence "heaped up and flowing over," yea, a thousandfold.

**III. HOW SURELY, ESSENTIALLY, IT LIES IN CHRISTIAN WORK TO SPREAD.** It might be uttered as a taunt against Christian action, or at all events against this illustration of it, that the benefits were those of miraculous help to the body. But the taunt would be most unjust, for if there be one thing plainly written on the historic pages of Christianity now these eighteen centuries, it is this, that *wherever its works are found*—not simply its profession—life and inquiry and devotion are found. *Whenever* souls are being saved, and *wherever*, there and then are found a life and spirit of inquiry and—the multitude athirst.

**IV. HOW DEEPLY IT SEEMS TO LIE IN THE GENIUS OF CHRISTIANITY TO EVOKE GRATITUDE OF THE LARGEST AND STRONGEST AND MOST PRACTICAL.** It is quite true that there is "all the world's" difference between the blessings that Christianity gives and the returns that it receives from those most deeply, truly, touched by it. Yet none the less is it true that, when these bring of their *best*, though that best may be far as earth below heaven, it is to be accepted as a true testimony of their gratitude, "well pleasing to God." For what Paul had done the islanders returned "many honours," and actually "laded him with such things as were necessary."

**V. HOW GREAT A PRACTICAL ADVANTAGE IT IS TO ANY GROUP OR COMMUNITY OF PERSONS TO HAVE AMONG THEIR NUMBER ONE OR TWO OF THE REAL CHRISTIAN STAMP.** Probably the special reference of ver. 10 is to Paul and his immediate *collaborateurs*, who had lodged with him at the house of Publius, and had come to be known as particularly belonging to him, as he taught or worked miracles among the people. Yet, at any rate, we are certainly not told of a single thing these said or did, till we are told how they came in for a share of all the bountiful, generous things given by the islanders, "Who also honoured *us* with many honours; and when *we* departed, laded *us* with such things as were necessary." There were none ever in the company of Jesus but had the opportunity of taking infinite advantage from it. And there are none in the company of the thorough, honest uncompromising servant of Christ, but get some share of the advantage.—B.

**Ver. 14.—A week with brethren.** It cannot be that this one verse was written for nothing. Like a waif and stray on the wide waters of Scripture, to the careless eye, it is anything but really such. We may notice touching the events the verse records—

**I. THEIR PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE ON THIS OCCASION.** 1. They included the heightening pleasure of a very agreeable surprise. 2. They speak the affection of a hearty *invitation*. Invitations are often as superficial and insincere and abased to ill purpose as many other good things. But the *genius* of them is good. They mean care and regard, respect and love, willingness and an anticipation of what may be in brethren's hearts. 3. They are tinted with a certain sacred hue. Did not a "seven days" pressing invitation mean to make sure of one "day of the Lord" together? Those who gave

that invitation longed for the opportunity it would bring for themselves and others. They wanted what the memory of it would give them to lay up as though "precious store." Those who received that invitation would read respect to themselves in it, and what was better, the sign of religious life and love. 4. They were a most welcome contrast to the scenes and the dangers, the strife and the talk and the company of all the time since Paul and his companions set sail from Cæsarea (ch. xxvii. 1).

II. THEIR STANDING AND LASTING SIGNIFICANCE. They tell of the loving, longing, purposing *communion of brethren*. They stamp the genuineness and even superior sort of *Christian brotherhood*. The communion of Christian brethren is: 1. Distinctly honouring to the Master, even him who himself once said, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8). 2. It is distinctly adapted to be useful at the time to those brethren themselves, for reminding them of the relation of all of them to *One*; and of their mutual relations; for comparing experiences, for imparting instruction, for joining in the quickening exercises of united worship, so stirring to deepest feelings of the heart, and so stimulating to faith and love. 3. It is, further, in one particular direction specially inspiring. While by nature it takes out the painfulness of many a strong present impression, it also supersedes these by the materials and the very *scenery*, which are sure to abide, full of the resources of comfort and encouragement for "the future distress." How much we live on memory! What a force holy memories have proved themselves! Those that have come out of the silence and the solitude of the closet have had their peculiar mission. Certainly not less powerful for good have those holy memories been which have seemed to come borne by "a cloud of witnesses," the former companions of our thoughts, our prayers, and our praises. 4. It is entitled to expect special influences from above, and the special presence of the Holy Spirit (ch. i. 4; ii. 1). Those who meeting together seek by all means within their reach and by prayer, light, and knowledge, love and grace, will be those most abundantly rewarded. Light will be reflected from face to face, and love will glow from heart to heart. It is not vainly added, "So we went toward Rome." The weeks, the days, the hours, were numbered of Christian converse for Paul—of Christian help and enjoyment, whether given or received. And the surprise the Master had graciously prepared is gratefully received. It assists Paul, body, mind, and soul, in his journey "toward Rome."—B.

Ver. 15.—*Gratitude and courage well linked together*. Paul speaks elsewhere of the severity in some sort, at all events of the *stress*, laid upon his spiritual sympathies at times (2 Cor. xi. 28—30). We can well understand that any severity, any pain, felt from the claim set up by such sympathies lay not in the act of sympathizing, but in the consideration of the state of things, the sins, the errors, the inconsistencies in "all the Churches," or in the members of them that called for both "care," on the one hand, for the erring, and on the other sympathy with the aggrieved. The sympathy which he so ungrudgingly gave, however, at whatever expenditure, he had a wonderful heart to receive when proffered to himself. And it is among the signs of his large and susceptible heart that it was so, and that he made so much of it. Here we read of another help of this kind given him by the way. How gratefully and with what appreciation he received it! He felt it was a token of the Divine presence and the Divine goodness, and that as such it must be used and improved. Therefore first he "thanked God," and then "took courage" afresh. Let us notice the following implications of this verse:—

I. THE HIGHEST STYLE OF CHRISTIAN PURPOSE AND ENTERPRISE IS AIDED BY HUMAN SYMPATHY. 1. This is great testimony to the *inartificial* character of Christianity. 2. It is one of its great safeguards against superciliousness and other temptations to affect separateness from or superiority to ordinary humanity.

II. THE SIMPLEST STYLE OF SHOWING SYMPATHY AND KINDNESS STRIKES HOME ALL AS SURELY TO THE HEARTS OF THE GREATEST AS TO THOSE OF THE HUMBLER.

III. GRATITUDE IS ALWAYS DUE TO GOD, WHO, HOLDING ALL HEARTS IN HIS HAND, MOVES NOW THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO SHALL COME TO GIVE US SPECIAL HELP FOR SPECIAL NEED. 1. How often help coming at the *exact* crisis of need ought to count with all as great moral force as a physical miracle, for our persuasion, that a heavenly Friend is observantly and graciously watching our every step! 2. What an *incentive* to religious life the network of hope and fear, joy and sorrow, and all the play of light and

shade, because such constitution of life finds the prized opportunities of Divine interposition, as no mere equable life, were it *all* light or *all* *shade*, could possibly find.

IV. THE FAITHFUL SERVANT OF CHRIST NEVER MORE FEELS HOW DUE THANKS ARE TO HIS MASTER THAN WHEN THAT MASTER APPEARS TO SHOW HIS OWN COMMANDING INTEREST IN HIS OWN WORK. How many the ways are in which Jesus does this! 1. By the occasional manifest blessing upon it that he gives. 2. By the Spirit he puts into the hearts of many to uphold the hands and arms of those who do the actual work. 3. By such more delicate methods as that now before us, when the help that the many bring to the *one* is seen, ay, and felt, to lie in the life and the love that the Divine work has wrought in their heart. They can *bring nothing* except, perhaps, that *all* to bring, themselves.

V. THAT THE REAL THING, COURAGE, WHICH DOES NOT BURN DOWN, AWAKENED THOUGH IT MAY BE BY HUMAN AID AND SYMPATHY, RESTS EVER STILL ON THE DIVINE. It was not in obedience to any hollow professionalism that Paul "thanked God." Nor did his courage lack the energy that came from sincere acknowledgment of dependence on God. This was surely betokened by his "thanking God."—B.

Vers. 16—23.—*A unique prisoner.* With the masterliness of inspired history, exceeding brevity itself in the passage before us seems to reveal rather than conceal. A few powerful strokes of the pen portray and very strikingly a hero, and one at the same time as real and unusual as ever lived. Great, indeed, must have been the length and the fulness of detail given, if the method of detail had been the one chosen, in order to attain the result of leaving with us an equally correct and complete apprehension of the position of Paul now, the manner of man he was, and the scope of Divine providence. The intense interest for Paul of reaching Rome is lost, lost indeed without a moment's mention of it on the part of the history, in the intenser interest that gathered round, and which he helped to *make* gather round, the object of his coming there. Of the one the history says nothing, but it says *all* of the other. And no sooner are we told the bare fact that Paul had reached Rome, than these following facts find prominent mention. We are told—

I. THAT THE PRISONER IS NOT PUT INTO THE PRISON. 1. No one there wanted to put him in. He had found favour too certainly already. 2. There was no need to put him in. His word could be trusted, and "one soldier" was considered enough to save appearances. 3. Prisons and "jailors" and authorities had already had too much of having him and others of the same sort in prison (ch. v. 19; xii. 8; xvi. 26), in Judaea; and perhaps, for the present at all events, the Romans and even the Jews in Rome were wiser for their own interest.

II. THAT FOR THE ACCUSED THERE ARE FOUND NO ACCUSERS AT ALL.

III. THAT THE MAN WHO IS TO BE TRIED IS DRIVEN TO ENDEAVOUR TO FIND ANOTHER SORT OF JURY, AND ONE OF THE MORE UNMERCIFUL KIND, FOR HIMSELF.

IV. THAT THE SAME MAN IS NOT ONLY SPEEDILY RELIEVED FROM ANY IMPUTATION OF FAULT, BUT IS COURTEOUSLY ASKED FOR HIS GOSPEL, BY THIS LARGE AND INFLUENTIAL JURY. "A great door and effectual" was now at once opened for the apostle. His Lord's promises and his own heart's deepest wishes begin to be fulfilled (ch. xxiii. 11). With abounding zeal Paul uses his opportunity; he draws from all "the Scriptures;" he testifies "from morning till evening;" he interests his hearers, is the means of the conversion of some, and the awakener of much inquiry and "great reasonings" among others. Nor withholds the faithful and searching rebuke. It is again "the whole counsel of God" which he does not shun to declare.—B.

Ver. 24.—*The leading results following upon preaching.* As Jesus went before us all, in our sorrows, difficulties, and holiest joys, so, even if in less degree, his first apostles went before us in very many experiences of the first preaching of the gospel with which we are now perfectly well acquainted. The successes and the bitter disappointments of the Christian preacher are at this very time keenly felt by Paul, and other of the solemn phenomena lie open before him, and observed by him evidently with very pained observation, were treated by him in a way full of instruction for ourselves. The short but speaking comment of this verse, on Paul's first preaching of the gospel of Christ in Rome, though no doubt on this occasion almost exclusively to his



own people the Jews, is exceedingly worthy of our notice. We may notice these typical effects of the gospel of Christ faithfully preached.

I. IT EXCITES THE STIR OF LIFE.

II. IT EXCITES A PECULIAR KIND OF STIR OF LIFE. It is not the life of mind *alone*. It is not like the interest that gathers quickly round the finest discoveries and investigations of science. It has another unmistakable element, and one that refuses to be at all ignored, a certain *moral* element. Very quickly does it beg to be informed whether men "believe" or do "not believe." And it states that on *this* everything turns.

III. IT EXHIBITS INVARIABLY (?) AMID GREAT VARIETIES IN OTHER RESPECTS ONE UNIFORM PHENOMENON—SOME TAKE IT, OTHERS REFUSE IT. It is then that the Christian preacher, and the Christian man whoever he is, stands in the presence of the grandest, deepest, most inscrutable mystery beneath the sun—this, that the gospel of God's love in Christ presumably to be eagerly and intelligently seized by every man, sooner than the bread on which he feeds, is taken by some, is rejected by others. "Some believed . . . and some believed not!"—B.

Vers. 30, 31.—*A type and a model of the Christian preacher.* These striking, closing words of a history, than which, take it all in all, there is not a more impressive to be found—always excepting *the one history*—show the performing in right earnest of the parting injunction of the ascending Lord of the Church. For Rome is the *scene*, that metropolis and type of the world. "All" the various inhabitants of it, not Jews only, are now both sought and found. To these "the gospel" is preached. And the crucified but now risen Lord is the one central theme. We have, therefore, in Paul, at this most touching, most amazing episode of his career, a living example, and "by the grace of God" a truly *worthy* example, of "the faithful fulfilling" of the work belonging to the minister of Christ. These are the leading marks of him, as here instanced.

I. HE HAS A VOICE AND HEART FOR ALL WHOM HE CAN REACH ACCORDING TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH HE MAY BE PLACED OF PROVIDENCE. Paul cannot now go out to the highways and byways. But "his own hired house" is one kept, as very few others are kept in any analogous circumstances, with open doors. And doors open impartially to "all" who would come.

II. HE DOES NOT FEEL THAT HE HAS ANY TRUTH TO MAKE, OR EVEN TO DISCOVER, BUT ONLY TO PROCLAIM. 1. His message is to his hand. He has discovered its sum and substance long ago. He keeps to this theme. 2. This is his *forte*. And he does not profess another. The mind of the Christian preacher is abundantly open to any, or, if possible, to all, "arts and sciences and philosophies;" but these are not his sterling coin. They are not the matters for the pronounced deliverances of his voice. He may be beholden to them in his education, and it is a shame if he is not. He may lay them under any amount of contribution for purposes of illustration. But they are not the subject-matter of his preaching and teaching.

III. HE PROCLAIMS WITH AN UNUSUAL CERTAINTY OF SOUND, EVEN WITH BOLDNESS. This is the more remarkable, because: (1) What he has to say is not that for which there is at first any very largespread desire. (2) It is what is sure to be rejected by many contemptuously, by other many indifferently, while it will stir strong opposition in the heart and in the action of not a few. But, on the other hand, the clear ring of his voice and the unstammering declaration of his thoughts result from: (1) Strong personal convictions as to what he proclaims. (2) Determined personal attachment to it. (3) The spirit of loyal fidelity to it—that be it what it may, in the esteem of a thousand to one, yet he will lay it open before all as *its due*. It shall not suffer prejudice from suppression or from a timid partial disclosure of it. (4) Honest and not merely boastful upliftedness above regard to the personal consequences to self. The genuine preacher of the truth of Christ is not, indeed, to hold his life in his own hand, but he is "rather" to hold this—and unmistakably—that God holds, that his Master Christ holds, that life in *their* hand respectively. (5) An irresistible impulse to confront the people with his proclamation, and bring them by all means possible into such contact with it that they can no longer be ignorant of it, even if they flee from it and reject it.

**IV. HE PUTS THIS HONOUR ON HIS OWN WORK, ON HIS MASTER'S WORK, THAT HE CLEAVES TO IT, YEAR AFTER YEAR, WITH PERSEVERING DILIGENCE.** The work of Christ does, beyond doubt, stand in this blessed contrast with all other work, even the most necessary and the most innocent. It rewards confidence. It merits devotion. Its manifest and felt value grows with age and experience and power to gaze beyond the limits of sense. And when the use of all other work dwindles to the truer dimensions that belong to it, this justly magnifies itself and shines with brighter lustre. Paul must have often addressed himself and his own soul in the words in which he addresses Christians generally, in the most inspiring connection, "Wherefore be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as . . . your labour is not in vain in the Lord."—B.

**Ver. 2.—Humanity.** "And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness." How that kindness found expression is further detailed. "Heavy showers had come on, and the shipwrecked men were half benumbed with fatigue and cold. Pitying their condition, the natives lit a huge fire of faggots and brushwood, that they might dry their clothes, and gave them in all respects a friendly welcome." The "milk of human kindness" has ever made men helpful to each other in circumstances of calamity and distress, and perhaps the most painful instances of inhumanity the world has known may be found in the doings of those "wreckers" who used to entice the ships ashore, that they might plunder their cargoes. The term used here, "barbarous people," is somewhat misleading. F. W. Robertson says, "By 'barbarian' was meant any religion but the Roman or Greek—a contemptuous term, the spirit of which is common enough in all ages. Just as now every sect monopolizes God, claims for itself an exclusive heaven, contemptuously looks on all the rest of mankind as sitting in outer darkness, and complacently consigns myriads whom God has made to his uncovenanted mercies, that is, to probable destruction; so, in ancient times, the Jew scornfully designated all nations but his own as Gentiles; and the Roman and the Greek, each retaliating in his way, treated all nations but his own under the common epithet of 'barbarians.'" The people of Malta were really of Carthaginian descent, and they probably spoke their ancient tongue, though mixed, perhaps, with Latin and Greek, since the island was on a great highway of trade.

**I. HUMANITY AS A NATURAL SENTIMENT.** It is the common bond uniting together mankind in helpfulness, sympathy, and charity. A sentiment which we can see is based : 1. On the fact that God hath "made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the earth." This truth of fact is now scientifically accepted, and called the "solidarity of the human race;" but it is the earliest divinely revealed truth, declared in the parentage of the race. 2. On the ties of brotherhood which follow the division of the race into separate families. The bond which binds together the members of families, binds together also tribes and nations, which are but God's great family. 3. On the common image of God which men share, and which applies chiefly to moral disposition. The most characteristic feature of God is his care for others, and, apart from the mischief done by sin, this image of God man still bears. Charity is God's image on man; selfishness is the devil's image on man.

**II. HUMANITY AS A NATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC.** More strikingly marked in some nations than in others. 1. Usually found in those whose country is exposed to calamity, by reason of a wide seaboard, or an unhealthy condition, or exposure to enemies. Men are bound together when a common fate hangs over them all. 2. Also found in nations marked by the milder virtues, rather than those energetic, active ones which so often lead to war. Peace-loving nations build hospitals, asylums, etc., and care for the suffering members. War tends to make men indifferent to suffering. England in later times has striven to carry humanity into her war, limiting in every way possible the distress it entails. Humanity strives for the day when war shall be a sound that men may hear no more for ever.

**III. HUMANITY AS A RELIGIOUS ESSENTIAL.** Christian people must be humane. They cannot be Christian and wholly fail of brotherly duties. Those who are bound to God in the dear bonds of redeemed sonship cannot fail to come nearer in sympathy to their brothers of the common humanity. Illustrate fully the Christian teaching on the culture of the spirit of humanity; the New Testament is full of

counsels similar to this: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—R. T.

Ver. 4.—*The superstitions of ignorance.* "The natives of Melita, seeing what they did, and ignorant of this prisoner's crime, and with their rough notions of the Divine government of the world, rushed to the conclusion that they were looking on an example of God's vengeance against murder. It was in vain that such a criminal had escaped the waves; a more terrible death was waiting for him." These men misinterpreted natural law into vengeance; yet there is a proneness in man to judge so. We expect that nature will execute the chastisement of the spiritual world. Hence all nature becomes to the imagination leagued against the transgressor. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera. The wall of Siloam falls on guilty men. The sea will not carry the criminal, nor the plank bear him; the viper stings; everything is a minister of wrath. On this conviction nations construct their trial by ordeal. The guilty man's sword would fail in the duel, and the foot would strike and be burnt by the hot ploughshare. Some idea of this sort lurks in all our minds. We picture to ourselves the spectres of the past haunting the nightly bed of the tyrant. We take for granted there is an avenger making life miserable. In the incident of this text, and the opinions expressed, we find the thoughts of vengeance which are cherished by those who do not know the true God. Superstitions are usually akin to truth, and contain within them some measure of truth; but they are exaggerations, fashioned by men's fears, which too often wholly distort and misrepresent the truth. Estimating the superstitious fears and sentiments of these "barbarous people," we note that they were—

I. RIGHT IN THEIR OPINION THAT WRONG-DOING NEVER ESCAPES PUNISHMENT. Their idea was that Paul was a criminal, guilty of some great crime, and justice was pursuing him; if he had escaped the doom of shipwreck, he could not get away from the avenger, who now struck at him in the viper's bite. Explain the early notion of the blood avenger, and the classical ideas associated with the Furies. It is important that men should have a deep and unquestioning conviction that the guilty never escape; but it does not seem to be absolutely and constantly true so far as this life is concerned. Show the moral and social importance of the assurance that punishment must follow sin, and impress that God's revelation wholly confirms the testimony of natural religion.

II. THEY WERE WRONG IN THIS, THAT VENGEANCE IS A MERE THING. They thought of it as a force ever working, blindly indeed, but certainly. If baffled in one way, it set about gaining its end in another. When heathen ignorance is changed to Christian knowledge, we find: 1. That the thing which we had called vengeance is but one of the modes of the Divine working. 2. That mere calamities—the things that we call accidents—are not necessarily Divine vengeance (see our Lord's teaching, Luke xiii. 1—5). 3. That God's wrath on sin need not find its entire expression in this life, seeing that he has all the ages to work in. This our Lord figuratively expressed when he said, "Fear him who can cast body and soul into hell." 4. That God's avengings, being those of a holy Father, can never rest satisfied in the suffering of the sinful creature, but must go on to secure the creature's redemption from the sin which issues in the suffering. Blind vengeance can rest in the destruction of the criminal. Fatherly love can never rest save in the recovery of the prodigal child. And God alone can be trusted with the avenging work. "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord."—R. T.

Ver. 5.—*Christ's promise precisely fulfilled.* In sending forth his disciples on their first trial mission, our Lord had given them this distinct assurance (Luke x. 19), "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." And when about to pass away from them in a surprising and glorious manner, our Lord commanded them to "go and preach his gospel to every creature," assuring them that these signs should follow them in their labours, "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." These may, indeed, be regarded as figurative Eastern promises that were only intended to assure the disciples of a general Divine pro-



tection while they were engaged in Christian service; but it cannot be uninteresting to notice that these promises were precisely fulfilled in the experience of the apostles. St. Paul, as narrated in our text, "shook off the beast," the deadly viper, "and felt no harm." From the incident it is suggested to us to consider—

I. THAT CHRISTIAN LIFE IS COVERED AND HALLOWED BY DIVINE PROMISES. We learn to speak of the "exceeding great and precious promises." They are stored for us in all parts of God's Word. It may be shown that they are (1) *abundant*; (2) *sufficient*, since no conceivable Christian circumstance or need is unreached; (3) *varied*, so as to suit all occasions; (4) *adapted*, so as to gain gracious influence on all dispositions. Nothing is more pleasantly surprising in a Christian life than the freshness with which the promises appear in every new season of anxiety and trouble. They come to us as if they were words just spoken by the all-comforting Father. They are the "everlasting arms" which hold us safe. They are the wings that bear us up and on and home to God. They are all true and faithful, "Yea and amen in Christ Jesus."

II. THAT THESE PROMISES ARE BOTH GENERAL AND SPECIAL. They assure, in large and comprehensive terms, that grace shall be given according to need; but, at least in the case of the apostles, we find them precise and definite. Illustrate from the case of taking up deadly serpents. Christians may err in two ways—either by generalizing the promises too much, or by particularizing them too much, and over-forcing their adaptation to the individual. Still, if we had a fuller faith, we might recognize a more definite character in God's promises. Illustrate by such a promise or assurance as this, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick."

III. THE EXACT FULFILMENT OF THE PRECISE PROMISES ASSURE THE CERTAIN FULFILMENT OF ALL. This is the lesson which we have to learn from the fulfilment of Christ's definite promise in the case of his servant Paul. It may be taken as a test case, by the help of which we may know whether we may trust all the promises, even those which do not seem easy to grasp, and those which seem to promise too much for mortals and for sinners such as we are. He who is true to his word in the little thing which we can fully test will be true to the great words which assure to us both grace and glory. And, as we see the viper falling harmlessly off the apostle's arm, we say, "Verily, he is faithful that promised."—R. T.

Ver. 8.—*Christian returns for kindness shown.* "Not far from the scene of the shipwreck lay the town now called Alta Vecchia, the residence of Publius, the governor of the island, who was probably a legate of the Prætor of Sicily. Since Julius was a person of distinction, this Roman official, who bore the title of *protos* (first)—a local designation, the accuracy of which is supported by inscriptions—offered to the centurion a genial hospitality, in which Paul and his friends were allowed to share. It happened that at that time the father of Publius was lying prostrated by feverish attacks complicated with dysentery. St. Luke was a physician, but his skill was less effectual than the agency of St. Paul, who went into the sick man's chamber, prayed by his bedside, laid his hands on him, and healed him. The rumour of the cure spread through the little island, and caused all the sick inhabitants to come for help and tendance. We may be sure that St. Paul, though we do not hear of his founding any Church, yet lost no opportunity of making known the gospel" (Farrar). In this instance the order of St. Paul's words have to be changed. He had received their "carnal things," and he gladly returned to them his "spiritual things." We observe—

I. CHRISTIANS CAN RECEIVE FROM THE WORLD BODILY AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL BLESSINGS. These are all that the world has at its command; but these Christians need. They may be illustrated under the headings: 1. *Hospitalities*. 2. *Charities*. 3. *Sympathies*. 4. *Practical aids*. So the barbarous people could light a fire and show kindness to St. Paul, and Publius could offer to him and his friends generous hospitalities. Especially dwell on the virtue of *hospitality*, noticing that it was a characteristic excellence of ancient times; it is a virtue carefully cultivated in the East, and more particularly among tribes, in the present day; and that, while it is retained, it is set under very narrow limitations in modern civilized nations, where class prejudices are strong.

II. CHRISTIANS CAN GIVE TO THE WORLD BOTH BODILY AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.

They have the common powers of brotherhood and helpfulness which belong to men as set in human relations; but they can also do for their fellows what no other class of men can do. They have a new life; that life finds its own peculiar and characteristic expression. It exerts both (1) an unconscious and (2) a conscious influence for good. Illustrate that Christians can save a city, as ten righteous men would have saved Sodom. They may preserve from temporal calamity by their calmness in the hour of danger, through their faith in God; as may be seen in times of shipwreck. They may have actual power to heal, as the apostles had. They can certainly witness for the living God; commend the service of the Lord Jesus Christ; carry healing balm to sin-sick souls; comfort the weary and heavy-laden; and minister truth and sympathy and love where these are needed. They can be "preserving salt; uplifted light-bearers; and upon them may hang, in full clusters, the rich ripe fruits which the world so greatly needs for its refreshing and its spiritual health. Impress that what the Christian man *can* be he *ought* to be and should strive to be. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."—R. T.

Ver. 16.—"*Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.*" Conybeare and Howson give very full details of the journey of the apostle and his company from Malta to Rome; reaching their destination, the following description of the place of imprisonment is given:—"Here was the *milliarium aureum*, to which the roads of all the provinces converged. All around were the stately buildings, which were raised in the closing years of the republic and by the early emperors. In front was the Capitoline Hill, illustrious long before the invasion of the Gauls. Close on the left, covering that hill whose name is associated in every modern European language with the notion of imperial splendour, were the vast ranges of the *palace*—'the house of Cæsar' (Phil. iv. 22). Here were the household troops quartered in a *prætorium* attached to the palace. And here Julius gave up his prisoner to Burrus, the prætorian prefect, whose official duty it was to keep in custody all accused persons who were to be tried before the emperor." There we see the great apostle still a prisoner, in bonds for Christ's sake. His bondage was of that kind technically known as a *custodia libera*, but the prisoner was fastened by a chain to a soldier who kept guard over him. For the apostle's references to his imprisonment, see Phil. i. 7, 13, 17; Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20; Col. iv. 18, etc. The constant changing of the guard no doubt brought all the soldiers under his personal influence, and enabled him to witness for Christ in the palace and in other places.

I. ST. PAUL'S LIMITATIONS. 1. *A prisoner.* 2. *A sufferer.* So all Christian workers still find themselves set under limitations of ability, of time, of means, of physical strength. And the question constantly recurs—Will we be mastered by our limitations, or will we master them in the power of a sanctified will? No man works for God on earth with an absolute and perfect freedom. The limitations are sent to give quality and character to our service. A man's credit lies, not so much in what he *does*, as in what he *overcomes* in order that he may do.

II. THE LIMIT OF ST. PAUL'S LIMITATIONS. They bore relation: 1. Only to *body*; to restraint of bodily action, and to pain of body. 2. Not to *mind*; since no gyves have ever been framed that can bind this. 3. Not to *character*; which no sort of earthly persecutions or calamities need affect. 4. Not to *will*; which can maintain its set purposes, even when it is rendered helpless to carry them out. 5. Not to *life-work*; which the earnest man will surely carry on somehow. The Christian mastery of bodily disabilities, infirmities, and limitations, may be illustrated from the Apostle Paul, from J. Bunyan the prisoner in Bedford jail, or from such sufferers from bodily infirmity as R. Baxter, R. Hall, H. Martyn, F. W. Robertson, etc. There are martyrs who did not die, whose service for Christ has been noble and heroic.

III. ST. PAUL'S TRUE LIBERTY UNDER SEEMING LIMITATIONS. Illustrate and impress that, with all his bonds and sufferings upon him, he could: 1. Still *live* Christ. 2. Still *work* for Christ. 3. Still *write* of Christ. 4. Still *speak* for Christ. 5. Still *personally* "meet for the inheritance of the saints in the light."—R. T.

Ver. 31.—*The kingdom of God, and things of Jesus.* Our historical record of the great apostle closes with a picture of him fully and earnestly engaged in the loved work of his life, even under the limitations of captivity, and there is peculiar significance in

the terms which Luke uses. The apostle is said to have been engaged in "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus, with all confidence." Illustration may be given of St. Paul's restless activity and consuming zeal in preaching Christ. He could say, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" He must have held and cherished the holiest convictions; he is the first and noblest instance of absorbing, inspiring enthusiasm for Christ. He was now a prisoner, but he would preach Christ with the guard beside him. He could not preach Christ in temple, church, or large room, so he would preach Christ in his own house. He could not gather the many, so he would preach Christ to the few who came to see him. Compare Adolphe Monod, who lay for months on a sick-bed, and could conduct no public services, so spoke of Christ from his bed every Sunday afternoon to the friends that gathered round him, as long as he was able. Two things are especially noted by Luke in these his closing words.

**I. ST. PAUL PREACHED THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** Under the figure of a Divine kingdom Messiah's times had been prophesied by Daniel (ii. 44; vii. 14, 27). John the Baptist stood forth as a prophet to proclaim, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our Lord gave the same words to his apostles when he sent them forth upon their trial mission; it was the message which they were everywhere to deliver. The figure was not a new one. It was not a fresh thing for God to claim the rule of souls. The government of ancient Israel had been a *theocracy*, or direct rule of Jehovah. The new thing was for God to set up this government on earth in the person of his Son, the Son of man and Son of God. He came to help us more clearly and more fully to see that the kingdom of God is the rule of his loving, holy, and fatherly will; and that will may be made known in two ways. 1. By definite and express commands. In this way it had been made known to Israel. 2. By the immediate and living authority of Jesus Christ, who gives us God's will directly, putting it into close relation with all our circumstance and need. To be in the kingdom of God now is to be directly dependent, day by day, upon the guiding, teaching, leading, of the living Lord Jesus Christ.

**II. ST. PAUL PREACHED THE THINGS CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.** Those things include: 1. Trying to make the history and teachings of the Lord Jesus known, so that men might have a solid foundation whereon to rest their eternal hopes. 2. Trying to make Christ himself known, because his will is the reflection and expression of himself. 3. Trying to make the fulness and freeness of Christ's grace known, so that men's confidence might be won to him. 4. Trying to make Christ's offices and relations known; because he is (1) the Dispenser of pardon; (2) he has the bestowment of the Spirit; (3) he stands in the place of our High Priest; and (4) he is to be our final Judge. The kingdom of God is come for all hearts that are fully consecrated to Christ. It will have come for the world when "every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue confess to him." God will reign when Jesus shall be acknowledged "King of kings, and Lord of lords."—H. T.





## VOLUME II.

### CHAPTER XV.

THEME	PAGE
The Controversy ...	7
The Paroxysm ...	8
A Grave Crisis in the Kingdom of God : Lessons ...	9
A Grave Crisis in the Kingdom of God : more Lessons ...	10
Self-Sacrifice for Christ ...	11
Apostles at Fault...	12
The Judaizers at Antioch ...	13
The Council at Jerusalem ...	14
Decision of the Council at Jeru- salem ...	15
Effects of the Mission from the Church	15
Beginning of the Second Missionary Journey ...	15
The First Council : Spiritual Liberty established ...	16
The Spirituality of the Gospel ...	16
Spiritual Heroism ...	17
Contention amongst Brethren ...	17
A Great Dissension on the Threshold of the Gentile Church, and the Apostolic Management of it ...	17
Symptoms more Startling ...	19
Circumcision and Salvation ...	21
The Jerusalem Church ...	22
Salvation by Grace for all ...	22
The Highest Christian Commendation	23
Reasonable and Unreasonable Burdens	24
Contentions and Separations ...	25

### CHAPTER XVI.

The Choice of a Fit Person ...	32
The Call ...	33
Truth and Falsehood ...	34
The Church's Duty and Reward ...	35
The Call of God and the Appeal of Man : a Missionary Sermon ...	36
The Opened Heart ; or, the Power of Divine Gentleness ...	37, 45, 52

### THEME

### PAGE

Five Truths from Philippi	38
God in the Earthquake ...	39
Christian Remonstrance ...	39
Paul and Timothy ...	40
The Journey to Macedonia : the Happy Beginning ...	41, 44
The Witness of Evil to the Good ...	42
Joy in Tribulation ...	42
Unexpected Deliverance ...	43
Paul's Second Missionary Journey commenced ...	44
A True Epoch in the History of the Gospel : Advance from Asia to Europe ...	44
The Cry of a Perishing World after Christ...	45
The Kingdom of Light revealing itself ...	45
The First European Persecution ...	46
Light in the Darkness ...	46
A Remarkable Conversion ...	46
Household Salvation ...	47
Apostolic Devotion owned ...	47
The Spirit's Course ...	47
The Day that looked like the Day of Small Things ...	48
An Illustrious Triple Triumph of Christianity ...	49
The Character of Timothy ...	51
The Leadings of the Holy Ghost ...	51
The Witness of Evil Spirits to Christ	53
Christian Triumph over Circumstances	54
The Jailor's Question ...	55
The Faith that saves ...	56

### CHAPTER XVII.

The Strange Alliance ...	63
The Cross of Christ in the Metropolis of Art and Philosophy ...	64
A Fulfilled and an Unfulfilled Pro- phesy ...	65
The Duty of Individual Research ...	65





## CHAPTER XX.

THEME	PAGE
"In Labours more Abundant" ...	149
The Charge ...	150
Human Life: Lights and Shadows ...	150
Paul at Miletus: the Review which Gratifies ...	151
Paul at Miletus: the Substance of Christian Doctrine ...	152
Paul at Miletus: the Forecast which exalts ...	153
Paul at Miletus: the Prospect which pains ...	154
Paul at Miletus: the Greater Blessedness ...	154
Scenes by the Way ...	155
Paul's Farewell to the Elders of Ephesus ...	156
Apostolic Supervision of Church Life	157
A Legacy of Divine Testimony ...	157
Troas to Miletus ...	158
Last Words ...	158
The Ambassador's Message ...	158
The Missionary Spirit ...	159
"The Gospel of the Grace of God" ...	159
The True Church ...	159
The Divine Secret of a Blessed Life	160
The Seven Days' Halt at the Gateway between Europe and Asia ...	160
Mingled Fidelity and Tenderness: an Example for Christian Ministers	161
Sure Springs of Affection ...	163
The Lord's Day Sabbath ...	163
Sleepy Eutychus ...	164
Earnestness in Preaching and Hearing	165
Paul's Testimony ...	166
The Cheerful Acceptance of a Hard Lot ...	166
God's Whole Counsel ...	167
Blood purchased ...	168
The Blessedness of Giving ...	168

## CHAPTER XXI.

The Steadfast Purpose ...	176
The Compromise ...	177
Human Affection and Sacred Service	178
Relations between Disciples ...	179
Fanaticism and Devotedness ...	180
Incidents by the Way ...	180
Paul and the Levitical Usages	181
Danger and Deliverance at Jerusalem	182

## THEME

## PAGE

Miletus to Tyre: the Steadfastness of a Holy Mind ...	182
Tyre to Cæsarea: the Will of God in the Heart of his Servant ...	183
Arrival and Reception at Jerusalem	183
The Prophecy fulfilled ...	183
The Roman Soldier Face to Face with the Christian Apostle ...	184
Widening Streams of Christian Love	184
Tender Heart to a Strong Conscience ...	185
A Biography of Honour, written in a Name and Title only ...	185
The Advocate of the Gentiles ...	185
The Pastor and Elders of the Church not Infallible ...	187
The Spirit in Paul, and the Spirit in Others ...	187
The Influence of Personal Affection on Christian Ministers ...	189
St. Peter and St. Paul compared in Boasting ...	189
Old Disciples ...	191
The Perils of Over-Caution ...	191
Party Prejudices ...	192

## CHAPTER XXII.

The Apology ...	196
Argument and Prejudice ...	197
"The Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us" ...	198
The Earthly and the Heavenly Citizenship ...	199
Paul's Self-Defence before the Jews ...	199
Danger and Deliverance ...	200
Paul before the High Council ...	200
Paul's Defence of himself to the People	201
Rescue of the Prisoner and Reference of his Cause to the Jewish Sanhedrim ...	201
A Model Self-Defence ...	202
The Testimony of Religious Experience ...	203
"That Just One" ...	203
The Calling and the Gifts of God ...	204
Men's Past Sins often the Unknown Determiners of their Future Life, its Opportunities, and its Disqualifications ...	205
The Sincerity of St. Paul's Judaism ...	206
The Claims of a Personal Divine Revelation ...	207

THEME	PAGE
Paul's Commission to the Gentiles ...	207
The Unreasonable Excitement of Crowds ... ..	208
Times to suffer, and Times to get Relief from Suffering ... ..	209
Naturally and Spiritually Free-Born	210

### CHAPTER XXIII.

Policy ... ..	216
Special Providence ... ..	217
"Good Conscience before God" ...	218
Things Dubious and Things Certain ...	218
The Powers that act on us from With- out ... ..	219
Paul at Cæsarea ... ..	220
Paul before the Sanhedrim ... ..	220
The Human Judge in the Presence of the Divine ... ..	221
Light in the Darkness ... ..	221
Conspiracy defeated ... ..	221
A Threefold Example of True Great- ness ... ..	222
The Hope of the Living and the Resurrection of the Dead ... ..	223
The Sympathizing and Mindful Master	224
A Good Conscience ... ..	225
Passion under Insult ... ..	226
The Resurrection a Dividing Doctrine	227
Divine Cheer in Anxious Hours ...	228
Providential Protections ... ..	229
Strangers' Testimonies to God's Ser- vants ... ..	229

### CHAPTER XXIV.

"Not this Man, but Barabbas" ...	235
Malice, Innocency, and Power ...	235
A Powerful Incentive to a Noble Life	236
Rare Heroism and Common Folly ...	237
Paul before Felix ... ..	238
The Divine Word and the Conscience	238
The Governor's Court ... ..	239
The Just Man's Defence ... ..	239
Practical Religion ... ..	240
The Character of Felix in the Light of Christianity ... ..	240
The Indictment that was a Self-Indict- ment ... ..	240
The Defence of Paul ... ..	241
The Confession of a Coherent Worship and Faith ... ..	242

THEME	PAGE
A Hope grown from a Deep and Mani- fold Root ... ..	243
The Highest Powers eluded by the Heart's Subterfuges ... ..	243
The Influence of a Good Ruler on National Evils ... ..	244
"Most Noble Felix;" or, the Power of the Flatterer ... ..	245
The Way called Heresy ... ..	245
Loyalty to God and Men ... ..	246
St. Paul's Liberty ... ..	247
The Substance of the Faith in Christ	248
Convenient Seasons ... ..	249
Covetousness excusing Injustice ...	249

### CHAPTER XXV.

Persistent Hatred ... ..	254
"Audi Alteram Partem" ... ..	254
The Enlightened, the Unenlightened, and the Great Overruler ... ..	255
Mismeasurement of the Great and Small ... ..	256
Power, Degeneracy, and Consecration	256
Tenacity in Right ... ..	257
Worldly Judgment on Religious Matters ... ..	258
The Way opened to Rome ... ..	258
Paul in the Presence of King Agrippa	259
Courage to live ... ..	259
Spiritual Deprivation ... ..	260
Seeking Favour to cover Wicked De- vices ... ..	261
Protestations of Innocence ... ..	262
Appeal to Cæsar ... ..	262
Party Accusations ... ..	263
Interest in the Prisoner for Christ ...	264

### CHAPTER XXVI.

The Apology ... ..	269
The Credibility of the Resurrection ...	270
Gradations in Guilt ... ..	270
Minister and Messenger ... ..	271
"The Heavenly Vision:" a Sermon to the Young ... ..	272
The Penalty and the Resources of a Devoted Life ... ..	273
The Christian's Desire ... ..	274
Paul before Festus and Agrippa ...	275
The Apostolic Defence in the Pre- sence of Festus and Agrippa ... ..	277
Resurrection in the Light of Revela- tion ... ..	277

THEME	PAGE
The Mission of the Gospel to the World ... ..	277
The Believing Retrospect ... ..	277
The Great Decision ... ..	278
The Conditions of Hearing to Profit ...	278
The Hope of the Promise ... ..	279
The Reckless Rushing to assume the Moral Responsibilities of Others—an Exceeding Madness ... ..	280
The Ascended Saviour's Description of his own Work among Men ...	280
Christ's own Stress laid on Faith in a Personal Object ... ..	281
The Make of a Heavenly Vision, and its Use ... ..	282
The Mission and Burden of the Evangelist ... ..	283
A Good Confession ... ..	283
A Threefold Illustration of the Irrepressible Energy of the Truth ...	284
An Unwilling Contribution to the Truth ... ..	284
A Mournful "Almost," on a Light Lip ... ..	285
Secret Acquittals ... ..	285
St. Paul a Pharisee ... ..	286
The Messianic Promise ... ..	287
The Incredibility of the Resurrection ... ..	288
St. Paul's Message compared with Prophecy ... ..	288
"Both Almost, and Altogether" ...	289

## CHAPTER XXVII.

The Voyage ... ..	301
The Escape from Shipwreck ... ..	301
The Voyage of Life ... ..	303
Spiritual Refreshment ... ..	303
Endeavour and Attainment ... ..	304
Disappointment ... ..	305
Divine Ownership and Human Service ... ..	306
The Divine and the Human Will ...	307
The Shipwreck of the Soul ... ..	307
The Voyage to Italy: an Allegory of the Christian's Course ... ..	308
The Example of Paul in the Storm ...	309
The Victory of Faith ... ..	309
The Bad Man's Extremity, God and the Good Man's Opportunity ...	310
A Glimpse at Human Nature and its Behaviour in Three Varieties at One and the Same Conjunction ... ..	311

THEME	PAGE
An Unexpected Testimony to the Force of Goodness ... ..	312
The Means Human, the Power Divine	313
The Good Man's Power to win Confidence ... ..	313
The Mission of Divine Warnings ...	314
Good Cheer from a Good Man ... ..	315
The Sanctity of Human Life ... ..	316
Safety at Last, somehow ... ..	317

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Kindness ... ..	326
Refreshment ... ..	326
The Fall ... ..	327
A Picture of the Human ... ..	328
Human Kindness ... ..	329
The Christian and the Jew ... ..	330
Concerning Christ and his Kingdom	330
Occurrences at Malta ... ..	331
The Passage from Malta to Rome ...	332
Paul and the Roman Jews ... ..	332
Paul's preaching at Rome ... ..	333
The Instability of Ignorance, and the Stability of the True Christian ...	333
"The Healing of the Nations" ... ..	334
The Break in the Clouds ... ..	334
The Reproach which must be borne ...	333
The Christian Advocate putting forth his Pleas ... ..	335
The Word of God trying the Hearts of Men ... ..	335
The Watchman upon the Walls of Jerusalem ... ..	335
A Strong Family Likeness ... ..	336
A Type of the Beneficent Action of Christianity ... ..	336
A Week with Brethren ... ..	337
Gratitude and Courage well linked together ... ..	338
A Unique Prisoner ... ..	339
The Leading Results following upon Preaching ... ..	339
A Type and Model of the Christian Preacher ... ..	340
Humanity ... ..	341
The Superstitions of Ignorance ... ..	342
Christ's Promise precisely fulfilled ...	342
Christian Returns for Kindness shown	343
"Paul, the Prisoner of Jesus Christ"	344
The Kingdom of God, and Things of Jesus ... ..	344



















